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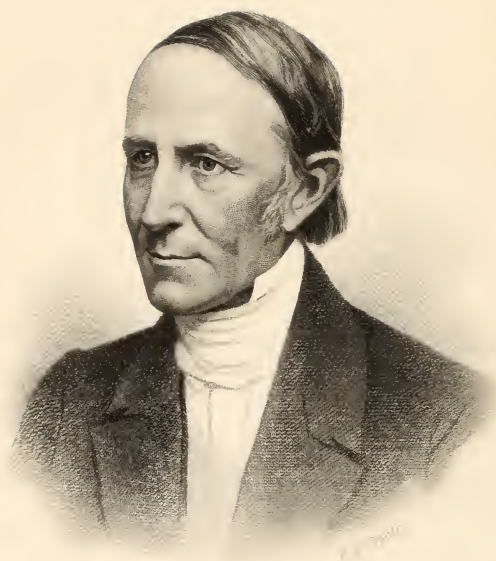
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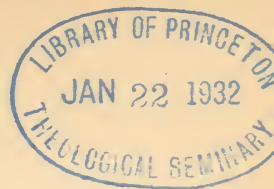
from Calvin Lincoln







*Calvin Lincoln*



A

# DISCOURSE

DELIVERED TO THE

FIRST PARISH IN HINGHAM,

SEPTEMBER 8, 1869,

ON

RE-OPENING THEIR MEETING-HOUSE.

---

BY ✓✓

CALVIN LINCOLN,

SIXTH PASTOR OF THE PARISH.

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WITH AN APPENDIX.

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HINGHAM:  
PUBLISHED BY THE PARISH.  
1873.

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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THE publication of this Discourse was postponed to the present time, because it was deemed desirable to accompany it by some account of the history of the Meeting-house. It is now the oldest place of public worship in New England, if not in the United States, having been erected in 1681. The undersigned undertook to collect the facts of its history, to be found in public and private records, and, also, those transmitted by traditions of our fathers, many of which, if not now preserved in a permanent form, will be in danger of being lost forever. We have been especially fortunate in discovering in various old manuscripts, many curious and interesting facts, which will appear in the Appendix. We are able to give a full list of those persons to whom seats were assigned in the Meeting-house before it was opened for public worship. We have illustrated our work by prefixing a Portrait of Rev. Mr. Lincoln, the present Pastor of the Parish, and by inserting also a View of the Ancient Edifice, and have added Plans of the Pews, both Old and New. In the labor of collecting and preparing the materials for the Appendix, each member of the committee has had the pleasure of participating.

SOLOMON LINCOLN,	} <i>Committee of</i>
QUINCY BICKNELL,	
GEORGE LINCOLN,	
FEARING BURR,	
HENRY C. HARDING,	
	<i>Publication.</i>

HINGHAM, July 1, 1873.



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## DISCOURSE.

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ACTS III: 25.—“YE ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE PROPHETS AND OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD MADE WITH YOUR FATHERS.”

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ONLY twelve years are wanting to complete two centuries, since our fathers first assembled for Christian worship beneath this roof. Compared with this edifice, the house which they erected was of narrow dimensions, and of rude and inexpensive workmanship. Neither plastering nor paint was employed to exclude the freezing winds of winter, or to conceal the roughly hewn timbers by which it was supported. Cushioned pews in an atmosphere artificially softened, were unthought of and undesired by the earnest men and women of that generation. Seats of oak covered the entire area, both of the floor and the galleries, and these were occupied on the one side by the male and on the other by the female portion of the congregation. Still, when we consider the numbers and the resources of the builders; their offering for the worship of God, for the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom, and for the highest welfare of our race, greatly exceeded in expensiveness, the more costly structure which we have now assembled to rededicate to the service of our father's God. Place yourselves in imagination in the midst of these early inhabitants. Somewhat less than fifty years had elapsed since their homes were the homes of a savage race; since their cultivated fields were covered with

primeval forests—the hunting ground and the hiding place of the bear and the panther. Our Puritan and Pilgrim ancestors did not generally belong to the wealthier classes in the country from which they emigrated. A portion of their estates, if no pecuniary sacrifice attended their sale, was necessarily expended in their passage across the Atlantic. Less than fifty years had been occupied in felling the woods, in reclaiming the soil and in building a shelter for themselves and their families. This was their second Meeting-house; and when its cost is estimated by the population and the property of the settlement, how exceedingly is its value enhanced, how are its proportions magnified? it stands before us as a worthy monument of Christian faithfulness and heroic courage, of lofty aims and willing sacrifices in the cause of Christ and for the extension of His kingdom in the world. As we go back in thought to that day in mid-winter, when for the first time within these walls, the incense of praise and prayer arose from subdued but believing hearts to the throne of the Eternal; can we withhold our heartfelt reverence for the enduring faith, the dauntless courage, and the deep-toned piety of the worshippers? and as we remember how inwrought was their conviction of God's immediate presence, how earnest their prayers, how real to their hearts were the verities of the spiritual world, what tender and awe-inspiring associations gather around the place: it becomes to us more than ever before the House of God and the Gate of Heaven.

The men who in weakness and penury executed this work and the generations which followed them, were quick in discovering the demand of the time in which they lived, and prompt in providing the required supply. As the town increased in population and property, more ample and improved accommodations for public worship became a necessity. Ascribing less of sacredness to the house than to the uses for which it was erected and by which it was sanctified; our fathers at an early

period, cheerfully consented to important changes. Two very considerable additions were made to its dimensions; the situation of the pulpit was changed and a new one constructed. From time to time pews were introduced, and this process continued until the last remains of the original seats of oak had disappeared. Other alterations in the interior arrangements conducive to the comfort of the worshippers, have shown the willingness of the parish to consult the wishes of its younger members, and to conform, in all things innocent, to the customs observed in other societies, and to the taste of the passing time.

Thus modified in its interior, but retaining its original external form, this Meeting-house after the passage of nearly two centuries, became the inheritance of the present generation.

In our early New England edifices however massive and enduring their timbers, no adequate ventilation secured those portions of them in proximity to the earth from a gradual but certain loss of vitality and strength. For years it had been known that our house of worship was suffering from the cause just named. Within the current year it became evident on examination, that thorough and somewhat expensive repairs must be made if we would save this venerated structure from rapidly increasing decay and from becoming at no very distant period a deserted ruin. This fact was not the only consideration which influenced the action of the parish. A very considerable portion of the Society, including the major part of its younger members, without whose active interest no society can live and prosper, believed the time to have fully arrived when the welfare of the parish demanded more comfortable pews on the lower floor, for the accommodation of the worshippers. Such extensive alterations when first proposed, were regarded by numbers in the parish, especially among its older members, with strong disfavor. Our life-long associations with the place,

the tender memories of childhood and the deeper experiences of maturer life, the history of the past, the struggles and the fortitude of the generation who, in obedience to the divine voice in their hearts had sought a home in the wilderness, marked epochs in our country's annals, when Christian patriots gathered within these walls to consult for the welfare of the States, and to ask strength and wisdom of God in prayer; the record of venerable men and women, of distinguished and able ministers and honored citizens who had here sought the instructions and here shared in the consolations and hopes of the Gospel; all seemed with a united voice to forbid the proposed innovations; and it appeared almost a sacrilege to remove a single memorial of a past so hallowed in our hearts by sentiments of reverence and love. These first impressions however, were removed as we calmly considered the question before us. It was generally seen that the intended work was not one of destruction, but of preservation; that the form and external appearance of the house would remain unchanged, and that the visible alterations in the interior would not extend to the more ancient, but to those portions of the building which were comparatively of recent construction; and it was very plain that we should more truly honor the fathers by imitating their practice, who were not slow in complying with the requirements of the time in which they lived, than by simply retaining the work of their hands. Great credit is certainly due to the more advanced in years for the cheerful spirit with which they have yielded their personal wishes in compliance with the wishes of the majority. Shall we not count it a specially happy omen, that a work of such magnitude in itself, and attended by so many difficulties, has been undertaken and executed with so much unanimity, with so much hope and courage? Have we not a right to expect that those who have so earnestly desired to improve this temple made with hands,

will, by a new dedication of themselves to the service of God and the cause of Christ, become more fitting temples for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?

A question of graver import now demands our consideration. Is our present ecclesiastical position true to the principles, on which this church as a living branch of the living vine, was first established? That our church in its theology has departed somewhat widely from the opinions held by its Puritan founders, there can be no question. Still I believe that while we have discarded opinions which they accepted as true, and adopted explanations of doctrines which they would have rejected as false, we are loyal to principles which they distinctly avowed and announced as fundamental. Our fathers, with all Protestants, were unquestioning believers in the sufficiency of the Scriptures as a rule of faith and practice. Most certainly they did not cross the ocean and endure the hardships of the wilderness to form a Lyceum for the study of the sciences, nor to found a school of philosophy to inquire whether men were endowed with a spiritual nature, nor whether a communication from the infinite to the finite mind were a possibility; but they came hither for the express purpose of establishing a Christian church on the foundation of Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ, himself, being the chief corner-stone. In Him they believed as the Son of God, the representative of divine perfections, the revealer of the divine will, and being such, as their Lord and Savior. This was the one prominent doctrine in the covenants used in the admission of members to church privileges; on this one fundamental doctrine our church has stood through its past history; on this foundation I thank God it stands to-day. In confirmation of this statement, I refer you to the records of the time, to the covenant adopted by the church at Salem, and cordially approved by leading representatives of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, and so far as our



knowledge extends to the prevailing practice throughout New England. At this early period if the representations of Cotton Mather are trustworthy, character was the primary condition of membership in the church; the candidate was not usually if ever required to accept a creed expressed in words of human device, and avowing a decided opinion on the more difficult and abstruse points in a metaphysical theology. The candidate was required to avow his faith in God and Christ and the Holy Spirit, and to declare his determination to devote himself to his Master's service; he was required to make the Scriptures his study, and to accept their instructions. Creeds, technically so called, were the contrivance of a later period. They were unknown in the churches until found necessary to check the growth of new opinions, the natural consequence of a faithful study of the sacred volume. Is it not obviously true that with finite minds, honest and intelligent inquiry for truth pertaining to the infinite, must issue in diversity of opinions? For this result our early churches, unintentionally it may be presumed, prepared the way in the covenants which they adopted. Am I reminded that the Massachusetts Puritans came to this country with a specific aim and purpose; and in trying to accomplish this purpose were severely intolerant of dissent? I allow at once that their views were narrow, and unjust to the inborn rights of the human soul; but we should remember that inconsistency is no uncommon mark of human imperfection. These same men were dissenters from the established church in England. They boldly defended their right to depart from Episcopal usages, and in defending their own course, asserted and maintained principles, which, followed to their legitimate conclusions, were utterly incompatible with bigotry in judgment, and persecution in practice. They solemnly declared that they could not conscientiously bow to the dictation of any human authority, because the finite mind owes its supreme allegiance to the

infinite mind. In this statement, we have the fundamental, underlying support, the seed truth of all rational liberty, civil and religious.

The men of this generation were earnest and profound thinkers; and do you believe that a quickening truth like this could long remain unfruitful in their ever-wakeful minds, or that in due time, the depth of its meaning and the extent of its application should not be generally understood and accepted? Still further, the church which our fathers planted in this place was on the very borders of the Plymouth Colony, and unquestionably held communion with the church of which Robinson was the pastor in England and in Holland. Can we believe that the band of pilgrims who left him with tearful eyes and aching hearts would soon forget his farewell address? You know how faithfully he warned them against an unintelligent adherence to accepted doctrines, exhorting them to follow him no farther than he followed Christ, and assuring them of his own belief "that God had yet more truth to break forth from his holy word." Great truths and worthy sentiments possess an innate life and a power of diffusion; they pass from mind to mind; they enter into the common thought until they become a reforming force in the world. Can we doubt that the words of the beloved pastor were often repeated by members of his flock amid the anxieties and bereavements of their first winter at Plymouth? Must they not have been frequently reported by such men as Brewster, and Bradford, and Winslow, in their intercourse with other churches? and when reported, could they fail to stimulate inquiry and to encourage freedom of thought?

In calling your attention to this very early period in our history, I would not be thought to suggest even a doubt concerning the opinions generally held by our fathers. There can be no question that they firmly believed in that logically adjusted system of doctrines previously published and defended

by the controlling mind in the Genevan School of Theology. But what I do urge and believe is this,—that the founders of our churches, by acknowledging the worth of the individual soul ; by insisting on man's direct responsibility to God for his opinions ; by urging believers to study with diligence the sacred scriptures and freely to search for the truth, did plant in the minds of the people, convictions and opinions which must lead to unanticipated results ; convictions in regard to the duties and consequently to the rights of the individual, which, with constantly increasing means of knowledge, must conduct them to improved methods of study, to new interpretations of scripture language, and to improved statements of Christian doctrines. Could men who believed themselves religiously bound to search for truth long refrain from claiming the right to avow their supposed discoveries, or from according this right to their fellow disciples ?

May we not confidently, and with gratitude to God, turn to our own past history in illustration of the views which have been presented and humbly claim that we are lineal children of Puritan and Pilgrim fathers ? Our church commenced its existence under the spiritual guidance and inspiring influence of a man of no ordinary mind or character. Rev. Peter Hobart was born in England, and received his education in the university of Cambridge. To an intellect of great clearness and vigor ; to large acquirements ; to pulpit talents which secured him distinction in his native land and in that of his adoption, he added a warm and generous heart. He had a quick perception of justice, a ready sympathy for the oppressed, and was an ardent friend of civil liberty. In defending what he believed to be the rights of a portion of his flock, he withstood, in argument, the magistrates of the colony ; and by doing so, incurred their censure ; so that on one occasion he was forbidden to preach in Boston, as the excellent Winthrop said,



“because he was a bold man and would speak his mind.” A man of such large liberal views on other subjects could hardly be a bigot in religion. Hence as Mather informs us, “he cherished a hearty love towards pious men though they were not in all things of his own persuasion, saying, ‘I can carry them in my bosom,’ and states that he had a strong dislike for men, who, under pretence of church discipline, were very pragmatistical in controversies, applying to them the words of Mr. Cotton, ‘that some men were all church and no Christ.’”

Of the Rev. John Norton, far less is known than of his predecessor. He received a liberal education and was endowed with highly respectable powers. His preaching was chiefly practical, and consisted to a great extent in applying Christian doctrines, as then understood, to the nurture of a divine life in the souls of his hearers. He was a faithful and beloved pastor.

The third minister of this parish, Dr. Ebenezer Gay, was widely known as a learned theologian and an independent thinker, as a man of great prudence, of sound judgment, and of a catholic spirit. Dr. Gay was a student through life. In his expositions of Christian doctrines he was generally understood to differ materially from his predecessors; so that dissatisfaction was occasionally expressed by a small number of his flock, not so much (as is often the case in our own time,) “on account of what he did as of what he did not say.” In the convention of Congregational ministers and in ecclesiastical councils, his great influence was invariably exerted in the promotion of peace and mutual charity among his brethren. Though a prudent man, Dr. Gay was a stranger to timidity. When every clergyman in Boston refused to join in ordaining the first minister of the West Church, because of his anti-trinitarian opinions, he attended the ordination, preached the sermon, and addressed the pastor-elect in the following words:

“I have been pleased in frequent conversations with you, to observe your thirst after knowledge, a desire to find truth, to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good.”

Dr. Henry Ware is known to you by his printed works, rather than by your remembrance of his services in this pulpit. His logical mind, his sound judgment, his large attainments and his candid temper, enabled him to exert a great influence on other minds during the protracted period of his public labors.

Of his successor, even were it needful, as he is still living, it would be unbecoming in me to speak.

As we thus review the past history of our church, can we withhold our warmest gratitude from that all-merciful Being who permits us to enter into this rich inheritance. How various and affecting are our associations with this ancient house of worship. Still how much more precious is the legacy bequeathed to us in the lives and characters of the Christian men and women of successive generations who have here assembled for communion with God. As we reflect upon their trials and their fortitude, their fidelity in the search for truth, calling no man master, yet bowing humbly before the authority of the Savior's teachings; as we think of their willing sacrifices in the interest of humanity, their piety towards God and their benevolence towards men; does not a voice, increasing in volume and power as it approaches, come to our hearts, through all this long past, commanding and entreating us to enter resolutely into their labors, urging us not to look backward and glory in their efforts and achievements, but to look forward, and with manly courage and devoted hearts to take up the work which God is now giving us to do?

And now, friends of this parish, the designed repairs on this house and the contemplated improvements in its interior arrangements have been completed. With glad hearts we again enter within its portals, and anew consecrate it to the

worship of the one living and true God. To Him the all-wise, all-holy, to Him the infinite being unseen by mortal eyes, but manifested in the person of His Son, we devote it: to the cause of Christ it is henceforth dedicated, to the unfolding of his truth and the enforcements of His precepts, to the highest interests of immortal souls, it is consecrated. Here may the unthinking be awakened, the inquirer for truth be blessed with a divine illumination: here may the mourner receive strength and comfort from the ever present friend of the afflicted, and here may all who are seeking a divine life, be helped forward in the pathway to Heaven. And while these walls shall stand, may there never be wanting within them a congregation of earnest worshippers, hungering to be fed with the bread from Heaven, nor a voice to proclaim to them the unsearchable riches of the gospel of Christ.







## APPENDIX:

CONTAINING A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST MEETING-  
HOUSE OF THE PARISH; A FULL HISTORY OF THE  
PRESENT, BEING THE SECOND HOUSE OF WORSHIP;  
MINISTERS OF THE PARISH; CHOIR; SINGING;  
ORGAN; HYMN BOOKS AND OTHER MEMO-  
RANDA FROM THE PARISH RECORDS.







## MEETING-HOUSES.

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Some account of the Meeting-house, the rededication of which, after extensive repairs, was the occasion of the preceding discourse, may be of interest to those who, from residence or association, have been by themselves or their ancestors connected with the town or parish to which this house has respectively belonged.

It was the second house erected for the purpose of public worship within the territorial limits of Hingham, including Cohasset. It was built by the town before it was divided into parishes.

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## THE FIRST MEETING-HOUSE.

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The first house for public worship was erected by the first settlers of the town probably within a short time after its settlement in 1635. It was situated on a slight eminence in front of the present site of the Derby Academy. It was surrounded by a palisado, and surmounted by a belfry with a bell. Around it, upon the declivity of the hill, the dead were buried, where after a repose of nearly two centuries, they were disturbed by the march of improvement.

In 1831, the hill was removed, and the remains, which were disinterred by the removal, were carefully collected and buried in a substantial vault, in the old fort, within the limits of the Hingham Cemetery, and a simple granite monument was erected over them, by order of the Town, and it bears the inscription in front, "To the first Settlers of Hingham." and on the reverse, "Erected by the Town, 1839."

The first Meeting-house like the early dwellings of the settlers, was undoubtedly a rude structure, although the scanty records

relating to it which remain, indicate that it was not wholly devoid of ornament, or of taste in its construction.

At a town meeting held March 11th, 1644-5, "Joshua Hubbard and Nicholas Jacob, was deputed by the town to make an agreement with the young men to set up a Gallery at the West end of the Meeting House as well for the length and breadth as for the place." An agreement was accordingly made with "Edward Gilman, Thomas Turner, John Sutton and Daniel Lyncon," empowering them to build "at the North side of the Meeting House, one Gallery for themselves and such as they shall admit of, the manner to be as followeth. The length to be the breadth of the Meeting House, the breadth of it not to exceed six feet and the height to be at the discretion of Stephen Lincoln, the workman; all the posts and pillars to be turned, the floor rabyted and matched and this gallery to remain the property of the aforesaid Edw. Gilman, Tho's Turner, John Sutton, the younger, and Daniel Lincon and the rest of their partners who join with them in the building."

This house was the only place for public worship, for forty-five years from the settlement of the town, and during the entire ministry of the first Pastor, Rev. Peter Hobart, who died January 20, 1678-9. Rev. John Norton was ordained as Mr. Hobart's successor in the pastorate, Nov. 27, 1678, Mr. Hobart taking part in the services. At the expiration of one year from the death of Mr. Hobart, January 19, 1679-80, the town "agreed to build a new meeting house with all convenient speed," and appointed a committee consisting of Capt. Joshua Hobart, Capt. John Jacob and Ensign John Thaxter, to view the meeting-houses of other towns, for the purpose of forming an opinion of the dimensions of a building necessary to accommodate the inhabitants, to ascertain the probable expense, and to report at the next town meeting, to be held in May following.

At the same meeting, the Selectmen were ordered, by vote to provide a new bell for the use of the town at the meeting-house and "they are to get one as big againe as the old one was, if it may be had."

On the third of May, 1680, the Selectmen were directed to "carry on the business to effect about building a new meeting-house," and at the same meeting it was voted "to have the new meeting-house set up, in the place where the old one doth now stand." The names of those who voted on this last question are recorded in the Town Records. There were thirty-four in the affirmative, and eleven in the negative.

The following from the Town Records shows the state of the vote :

At the above said Town Meeting, on the *third* day of May, 1680, these persons, whose names are under written, declared themselves, by word, to have the *new* meeting house set up in the place where the *old* one doth now stand.

Captain Joshua Hobart,	Nathaniel Beale, <i>Senior</i> ,	James Hersee,
John Beale, <i>Senior</i> ,	Edmund Pitts,	Thomas Andrews,
Deacon John Leavitt,	Joshua Lincoln,	Joseph Joy,
Thomas Hobart,	Thomas Marsh,	William Hersee,
Andrew Lane,	Francis James,	Matthias Brigs,
Thomas Gill, <i>Senior</i> ,	Stephen Lincoln,	John Chubbuek,
John Beale,	Moses Collier,	Josiah Lane,
Edward Wilder,	John Princee,	Robert Waterman,
Doctor Cutler,	John Langlee,	Matthew Whiton,
Ensign John Thaxter,	Joshua Beale,	Serjant Daniel Lincoln,
Thomas Lincoln, (husband-	Thomas Lincoln, (carpenter)	Samuel Stowell.
man), Caleb Beal,		

At the said Town Meeting, these persons whose names are under written declared themselves to be against the new Meeting House standing in the place where the old one *do* stand.

Daniel Cushing, <i>Senior</i> ,	Humphrey Johnson,	Ibrook Tower,
Simon Burr, <i>Senior</i> ,	Captain John Jacob,	Lieutenant John Smith,
Nathaniel Baker,	Serjant Matthew Cushing,	Jeremiah Beal, <i>Senior</i> .
Joseph Jacob,	James Whiton.	

On the 11th of August, 1680, the dimensions of the house were fixed by the town as follows: length fifty-five feet, breadth forty-five feet, and the height of the posts "twenty or one and twenty feet," with galleries on one side and at both ends.

In 1681, May 2, the town approved of what the Selectmen had done in relation to the building of the new Meeting-house and the place where it was to be set. Thirty-seven persons dissented from this vote. These transactions were brought to the notice of the Governor and magistrates who interposed their authority as will be seen by the following copies of papers in the archives of the State.

## FROM THE STATE ARCHIVES.

Boston, May 16th, 1681.

The Governo<sup>r</sup> and Magistrates having considered the p<sup>r</sup>sent motions in Hingham relating to the placing of a New meeting house and also perceiving by Information of the Hon<sup>d</sup> W<sup>m</sup>. Stoughton and Joseph Dudley Esq<sup>rs</sup> who were desired to view the place of the present House (which is judged to be inconvenient by them) do therefore hereby disallow of the setting up of a New meeting house either in the old place or in the plaine. And do further order that a new meeting of all persons in the Towne who have right to vote in such cases be speedily ordered at which it may be fairly voted where to place the new meeting house and the Selectmen are hereby required to make a speedy returne of the number of votes to the Hon<sup>d</sup> Governo<sup>r</sup>.

JNO. HULL, p<sup>r</sup> order.

Superscribed to the Selectmen  
of Hingham, to be communicated  
to the Towne.

At a Towne meeting holden at Hingham on the 24th day of May 1681 Thomas Andrews was Chosen moderator of that meeting and at the said meeting the vote passed by papers, with seventy-three hands for the new meeting house that is now building in Hingham to be set in the convenientest place in Captaine Hobarts land next or nearest to Samuell Thaxters house.

As Attest, DANIELL CUSHING, Towne Clarke.

26 May, 1681.

The magis<sup>ts</sup> having Considered the Returne of the Selectmen of Hingham in referrence to the voate for settling the meeting house there Doe Approove of said vote and Judge meete all Circumstances considered that the new meeting house be erected accordingly in the convenientest place in Cap<sup>t</sup>. Hubbards-land neere to Samuell Thaxter's house.

Past by y<sup>e</sup> Council,EDWD RAWSON, Secret<sup>y</sup>

Thus after a controversy of more than one year, the location of the proposed new house was finally settled; and immediate measures were taken to carry the votes of the town into effect.

## THE SECOND MEETING-HOUSE.

On the eighth day of July, 1681, Capt. Joshua Hobart conveyed to the Town by deed of gift, the site for the Meeting-house. It is the same on which the Meeting-house now stands.

### DEED OF THE LOT.

TO ALL CHRISTIAN PEOPLE to whom these Presents shall come, Cap<sup>t</sup>. Joshua Hobart of Hingham of the County of Suffolke in New England Sendeth Greeting :

Know <sup>re</sup> that I the afores<sup>d</sup> Captain Joshua Hobart, as well for the respect that I bear unto the Inhabitants of the s<sup>d</sup> Town of Hingham & other good causes and considerations me at this present especially moving have given granted, alienated assigned and confirmed and by these Presents doe fully freely and absolutely give grant alien assign and confirm unto the Inhabitants of the s<sup>d</sup> Town of Hingham and their heirs and successors forever A peice or pareel of land for to erect and sett a new meeting house upon of that lott of land which I lately purchased of Cap<sup>t</sup>. John Thaxter of s<sup>d</sup> Hingham, which s<sup>d</sup> granted piece or pareel of land lyeth on the front of said lott and being in breadth upon the front one hundred & fifty foot and in the rear one hundred & fifty foot and in depth one hundred and sixteen foot, as it is lying & being within the Township of s<sup>d</sup> Hingham butting & bounded southwestward with the Town Street that leadeth from the old meeting house toward the Plain and southeastward with the house lott of Samuel Thaxter & with the remainder of the above s<sup>d</sup> house lott northwestward & northeastward. Together with all and singular the libertys and priviledges belonging unto the s<sup>d</sup> granted premisses. And also all my right title and interest estate use propriety claim or demand of in or to the s<sup>d</sup> granted premisses with their libertys and priviledges. To have and to hold the said hereby granted peice or pareel of land for to erect and sett a new meeting house upon, of that s<sup>d</sup> lott of land and lately purchased of s<sup>d</sup> Cap<sup>t</sup>. John Thaxter and being one hundred & fifty foot in breadth afores<sup>d</sup> on the front and one hundred and fifty foot in s<sup>d</sup> rear & one hundred and sixteen foot in s<sup>d</sup> depth & lying in Hingham afores<sup>d</sup> & bounded as afores<sup>d</sup> with all and singular the libertys and priviledges to the s<sup>d</sup> granted premisses unto the s<sup>d</sup> Inhabitants and unto the sole and proper use and behoofe of them the s<sup>d</sup> Inhabitants of s<sup>d</sup> Hingham their heirs and successors forever. And I the s<sup>d</sup> Cap<sup>t</sup>. Joshua Hobart for myself my heirs executo<sup>rs</sup> adm<sup>rs</sup> and assigns doe by these presents covenant promise grant and agree to and with the s<sup>d</sup> Inhabitants and their heirs and successors in manner and form as followeth, that is to say, that they the s<sup>d</sup> Inhabitants of s<sup>d</sup> Hingham

and their heirs and successors shall and may by force and vertue of these presents from time to time and at all times forever hereafter lawfully peaceably and quietly have hold use possess and enjoy all the above granted premises with their libertys and priviledges without any rents acknowledgments or other dues or dutys to be yielded paid or done unto me the s<sup>d</sup> Cap<sup>t</sup> Joshua Hobart my heirs executo<sup>rs</sup> adm<sup>rs</sup> or assigns forever. And also that the s<sup>d</sup> granted premisses are free and clear and freely and clearly acquitted exonerated and discharged of and from all and all manner of other bargains sales gifts grants dowers and title of dowers and all other incumbrances whatsoever from the beginning of the world unto the day of the ensealing and delivery of these presents. And shall and will warrant the s<sup>d</sup> granted premisses forever ag<sup>t</sup> me the s<sup>d</sup> Cap<sup>t</sup> Joshua Hobart my heirs exe<sup>rs</sup> adm<sup>rs</sup> or assigns or any other person or persons claiming or pretending to claim any lawfull right title or interest in or to the s<sup>d</sup> granted premisses or any part thereof from by or under me the s<sup>d</sup> Cap<sup>t</sup> Joshua Hobart. IN WITNESSE whereof I the s<sup>d</sup> Joshua Hobart have hereunto sett my hand and seal this eighth day of July Anno Domini Sixteen hundred eighty and one, Anno Regni Regis Caroli Secundi XXXIII Joshua Hobart Sen<sup>r</sup> & a seal Signed sealed & delivered in the presenee of us witnesses Daniel Cushing Sen<sup>r</sup> John Thaxter E<sup>m</sup> Pitts Nathaniel Beale Selectmen of the s<sup>d</sup> Hingham. Upon the 3<sup>d</sup> of May 1692 Mr. Daniel Cushing and Nathaniel Beals appearing before me made oath that they were personally present & saw Cap<sup>t</sup> Joshua Hobart perfix his hand and seal to this above written instrum<sup>t</sup> and sett their hands as witnesses to the same and that at the same time John Thaxter and Edmund Pitts also sett their hands as witnesses. Sworn before me John Smith Assist<sup>t</sup>.

Nov<sup>r</sup> 25<sup>th</sup> 1703. Received and accordingly Entred and Examined

p. Addington Davenport Regist<sup>r</sup>.

The frame of the Meeting-house was raised on the 26th, 27th and 28th days of July, 1681, and the house was completed and opened for public worship January 8, 1681-2. It cost the town £430 and the old house.

A rate had been made in October, 1680, to defray the expense of the building. We are able to present the following copy of it, preserved in the handwriting of Daniel Cushing, Town Clerk.



## THE RATE OF 1680,

“FOR THE BUILDING OF A NEW MEETING-HOUSE.”

A Rate made the ninth Day of October 1680 by the Selectmen of the Towne of Hingham for the building of a new meeting house in Hingham.

	£	s.	d.
Imprimis Captaine Joshua Hobart.....	01	00	00
Nathaniell Beale Junior.....	01	04	00
Mathew Witon.....	01	04	00
William Woodecock.....	02	03	09
Josiah Loreing.....	03	17	01
Thomas Andrewes.....	07	10	05
Captaine John Thaxter.....	07	08	04
Edmond Pitts.....	03	10	00
Samuell Lineolne Senior.....	01	08	04
Samuell Lineolne Junior.....	01	10	00
Mordieay Lincolne.....	01	04	00
Enoch Hobart.....	06	18	04
John Chubbuck.....	07	01	08
John Tucker.....	04	15	00
Benjamin Lineolne.....	04	08	04
Israell ffering.....	03	00	00
John ffering.....	03	04	02
Edmond Hobart.....	01	00	10
Daniell Hobart.....	01	02	06
John Reeord.....	01	00	00
Samuell Hobart, promised.....	01	05	00
Thomas Gill Junior.....	01	05	00
Thomas Gill Senior.....	05	12	06
Samuell Gill.....			
David Hobart.....	01	10	00
Josiah Lane.....	03	16	08
Thomas Marsh.....	02	06	08
Ephraim Marsh.....	01	05	00
Jacob Beale.....	02	03	04
Ephraim Lane.....	04	12	00
John Lane, Carpenter.....	01	03	04
Thomas Lincolne, Cooper.....	03	14	02
George Lane.....	06	06	08
Thomas Hobart.....	04	14	07
Moses Collier.....	02	10	10
Joshua Lincolne.....	04	02	06
Thomas Lincolne, husbandman.....	07	12	06
Caleb Lineolne.....	01	00	00
Serjant Daniell Lineolne.....	04	00	00
Ephraim Nicolls.....	04	10	00
Thomas Lineolne, Carpenter.....	03	18	00

here followeth more of the Rate for building the meeting house.

	£	s.	d.
Henry Ward.....	.01	16	08
Robert Waterman.....	.02	18	04
Samuell Stowell Senior.....	.06	10	00
John Stowell, promised.....	.01	05	00
Dauid Stowell.....	.01	00	00
Joshua Beale.....	.03	08	04
Caleb Beale.....	.03	03	09
John Langlee.....	.01	05	10
Timothy Hewet. ....	.01	00	00
Israell Nicolls.....	.02	15	00
Thomas Nicolls.....	.02	08	04
James Hersee.....	.07	06	08
William Hersee.....	.14	05	00
John Hersee promised or freely giuen.....	.01	10	00
Elizabeth Hewet widow.....	.01	00	00
John Beale Senior.....	.00	00	00
John Beale Junior.....	.04	13	07
Stenen Lincolne.....	.03	14	02
Simon Gross.....	.01	04	00
Daniell Lincolne Junior.....	.02	15	00
Richard Wood.....	.01	00	00
Samuell Bate.....	.01	16	03
Doeter Cutler.....	.01	10	00
William Hersee Junior promised.....	.01	04	00
Arthur Caine.....	.01	00	00
Joseph Bate.....	.02	19	02
Nathaniell Beal Senior.....	.01	13	04
James Garnet giuen freely.....	.01	00	00
Joshua Hobart mariner.....	.01	00	00
John Low.....	.01	00	00
John Garnet promised.....	.01	05	00
ffrancis Garnet promised.....	.01	05	00
George Russell.....	.01	07	06
John Lewis.....	.01	00	00
Daniell Stodder.....	.02	03	04
Samuell Stodder.....	.01	11	03
Samuell Thaxter.....	.02	15	05
Joseph Joy promised.....	.01	10	00
Jeremiah Beale blacksmith.....	.01	10	10
Andrew Lane.....	.01	16	08
John Mayo.....	.01	04	08
John Prince.....	.06	08	04
Peter Barns.....	.03	16	08
Daniell Cushing Senior.....	.15	12	06
Daniell Cushing Junior.....	.01	04	00



more of the rate for building the meeting house.

	£	s.	d.
Matthias Briggs.....	.01	00	00
John Manfield Junior promised.....	.01	04	00
John Manfield Senior.....	.04	10	00
Nathaniell Baker.....	.08	07	11
James Bate Senior.....	.03	02	06
Benjamin Bate.....	.01	00	00
Joseph Bate Sone of James Bate.....	.01	00	00
Serjant Jeremiah Beale.....	.05	19	02
Purthee Mackfarlin.....	.04	00	00
John ffarrow Junior.....	.02	14	07
John ffarrow Senior & Nathan ffarrow.....	.02	11	03
Josiah Leauitt.....	.02	00	00
Israell Leauitt.....	.01	10	05
Deacon John Leauitt.....	.07	13	04
Joseph fford.....	.01	08	04
Thomas Sayer.....	.03	00	10
Simon Burr Senior.....	.04	18	04
Simon Burr Junior.....	.01	05	00
Cornelius Cantlberry.....	.07	10	00
Cornet Mathew Cushing.....	.09	05	00
Anthony Sprague.....	.06	06	08
Joseph Jones Senior.....	.05	06	08
Joseph Jones Junior.....	.00	05	00
William Sprague.....	.04	09	00
Robert Jones.....	.01	10	00
John Lazell.....	.05	18	09
Joshua Lazell.....	.01	00	00
Steuen Lazell.....	.01	00	00
Abraham Riply.....	.05	14	05
Lieutenant John Smith.....	.11	14	02
Mathew Hawke.....	.06	02	00
ffrancis James.....	.04	06	08
John Riply Senior.....	.05	06	03
John Riply Junior promised.....	.01	00	00
Joshua Riply promised.....	.01	00	00
John Bull.....	.01	04	00
Ibrook Tower.....	.01	10	00
John Stodder.....	.01	04	00
John Tower Senior.....	.02	17	06
Edward Wilder.....	.07	09	02
Ephraim Wilder.....	.01	06	08
John Wilder.....	.01	00	00
Captaine John Jacob.....	.12	17	11
Joseph Jacob.....	.03	13	00

more of the rate for building the meeting house.

	£	s.	d.
Samuell Bacon.....	01	04	00
Peter Bacon.....	03	06	08
Humphry Johnson.....	03	11	08
James Witon Senior.....	08	00	00
James Witon Junior promised.....	01	00	00
John Tower Junior promised.....	01	00	00
William Hiliard.....	01	08	00
Charles Stockbridge of Seittuate.....	01	00	00
Robert Dunbarr.....	02	03	04
Nathaniell Chubbuck.....	03	00	00
John Sprague.....	01	10	00
Benjamin Johnson.....	01	05	00
William ffisher promised.....	01	00	00
the totall sum 436	14	11	

This is a true Copy of the originall rate  
Testee Daniell Cushing Clarke

JOSHUA HOBART	} <i>Selectmen</i>
JOHN THAXTER	
EDMOND PITTS	
NATHANIELL BEALE	
DANIELL CUSHING	

## SEATING OF THE PEOPLE IN THE NEW MEETING-HOUSE.

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We are able to present a copy of a private record made by Daniel Cushing, Town Clerk, which has fortunately come into the possession of the Committee, and which shows to whom seats were assigned in the new Meeting-house, in compliance with a vote of the Town at the first Town meeting held in the new house, and before it was opened for public worship.

### FROM DANIEL CUSHING'S MANUSCRIPTS.

"Att a Towne meeting holden at Hingham on the fift day of January 1681 Mr John Norton our pastor & the two deacons (viz) John Leautit & John Smith, Captaine John Thaxter, Nathaniell Beale Senior, Serjant Thomas Andrews, Cornet Mathew Cushing & Ensigne Jeremiah Beale were Chosen by the Towne to order the Seating of y<sup>e</sup> people of the Towne in the new meeting house in Hingham & to doe it presently with all Convenient speed that they can possible, it being the first Towne meeting that was in the new meeting house. on the eight day of said January was the first Sabbath day that the people of Hingham met in the new meeting house to worship god, & Israell Nicolls the son of Israell Nicolls & Hannah beale the Daughter of Jeremiah Beale were the first Children that were baptized in the said meeting house which was on the said eight of January."

The record of the doings of the Committee above named "is as followeth:"

## IN THE DEACONS SEATE.

Deacon John Leauitt  
Deacon John Smith  
Mathew Hawks

## IN THE SEATE UNDER YE PULPIT.

John Beale Senior  
Tho<sup>s</sup>. Lincoln, Coop  
George Russell  
George Lane  
John Tower Senior

1 IN THE FORESEATE IN THE BODY OF  
THE MEETING HOUSE FOR THE  
MEN.

Captaine Joshua Hobart  
Daniel Cushing Senior  
Nathaniel Baker  
Doctor John Cutler  
Edmond Hobart  
Thomas Hobart  
Thomas Lincoln, husb<sup>ad</sup>  
William Harsey Senior

## 2 IN THE SECOND SEATE.

Edmond Pitts  
Nathaniel Beale Senior  
Edward Wilder  
Humphry Johnson  
Thomas Gill Senior  
Thomas Nicolls  
John Ripley Senior  
James Witon Senior

## 3 IN THE THIRD SEATE.

John Manfield Senior  
James Bates Senior  
John Tucker  
Cornelius Cantlberry  
Simon Burr Senior  
John Lazell  
francis James  
Caleb Beales

## IN THE FOURTH SEATE.

4

Abraham Ripley Senior  
Antony Sprague  
Joseph Jones Senior  
Benjamin Lincolne  
Moses Collier  
Samuel Lincolne Senior  
William Woodcock  
Israell fferring  
Josiah Lanc

## IN THE FIFT SEATE.

5

Nathaniel Chubbuck  
Samuel Stoder  
William Sprague  
Jacob Beale  
Joseph Joy Senior  
John ffarrow Junior  
Andrew Lanc  
Robert Waterman  
Peter Barns

## IN THE SIXT SEATE.

6

Peter Bacon  
Daniel Lincoln Junior  
William Hillard  
Ibrook Tower  
John Bull  
Nathaniel Beales Junior  
Samuel Hobart  
James Witon Junior

## THE SEUENTH SEATE.

Simon Gross  
John Wilder  
Daniel Hobart  
Joshua Lazell  
Arthur Cain

1 THE FORESEATE FOR THE MEN ON  
THE NORTH SIDE OF THE MEET-  
ING HOUSE.

Robert Jones  
John Prince  
John ffarrow Senior & Nathan  
Mathias Briggs  
Samuel Stowell Senior

2 THE SECOND SEATE.

John Stodder  
Henry Ward  
Samuel Bates  
Daniel Stodder  
Purthe Mackfarlin

3 IN THE THIRD SEATE.

John Sprague  
James Witon Junior  
John Tower Junior  
Thomas Jewell

4 THE FOURTH SEATE.

John Records  
Benjamin Tower  
Paul Gilford  
John Low  
Francis Garnet

IN THE PEW.

M<sup>rs</sup> Hobart  
M<sup>rs</sup> Norton

1 IN THE FIRST SEATE NEXT Y<sup>E</sup> PEW.

Captaine Hobarts wife  
L<sup>t</sup>enant Smiths wife  
Deacon John Leauitts wife  
John Riplys wife

2 IN THE SECOND SEATE.

Tho<sup>s</sup> Lincolne malsters wife  
old widdow Andrewes  
George Russells wife  
widdow Sprague  
Edward Wilders wife  
widdow Lane  
James Bates wife  
widdow Joy

3 IN THE THIRD SEATE. John ffarrow

Senior his wife  
widdow Barns  
the wife of Robert Jones  
The wife of John Tower senior  
widdow Lincolne  
the wife of Moses Collier  
The wife of William Woodcock

4 IN THE FOURTH SEATE the wife of

Robert Dunbar  
the wife of John Sprague  
the wife of John Stodder  
the wife of Daniel Stodder  
the wife of Samuel Stodder  
the wife of Purthe Mackfarlin  
the widdow Hewet

5 IN THE FIFT SEATE the wife of

John Lane Shoomaker  
the wife of John Dunbar  
the wife of Paul Gilford  
the wife of Thomas Jewell  
the wife of John Low  
The wife of Benjamin Tower

IN THE SEATES FOR THE WOMEN IN  
IN THE BODY OF THE MEETING  
HOUSE.

- 1 foreseate Nathaniel Bakers wife  
the wife of Daniel Cushing Senior  
the wife of Mathew Hawks  
the wife of Tho<sup>s</sup> Lincoln husband-  
man  
the wife of George Lane  
the wife of Thomas Hobart  
the wife of William Hearsey Senior  
widdow Deborah Tarlton

2 IN THE SECOND SEATE the wife of

Edmond Pitts  
the wife of Nathaniel Beale Senior  
the wife of Ensigne Jeremiah Beale  
the wife of Thomas Andrewes  
the wife of John Manfield  
the wife of James Witon Senior  
the wife of Humphry Johnson  
the wife of John Prince  
the wife of Daniel Lincoln Senior

## 3 IN THE THIRD SEATE, the wife of

Mathias Briggs  
 John Beales wife  
 the wife of Cornelius Cantlberry  
 the wife of Simon Burr  
 the wife of John Tucker  
 the wife of Joshua Beales  
 the wife of Steuen Lincoln  
 the wife of Samuel Stowell  
 the wife of Caleb Beales

IN THE FOURTH SEATE FOR THE  
 WOMEN IN THE BODY OF THE  
 MEETING HOUSE

- 4 The wife of John Lazell  
 The wife of Antony Sprague  
 The wife of Joseph Jones  
 The wife of Francis James  
 The wife of Abraham Riply  
 The wife of Samuel Lincoln  
 The wife of Benjamin Lincoln  
 The wife of Peter Barns  
 The wife of Israell ffering  
 The wife of Josia Loring

## IN THE FIFT SEATE

- 5 The wife of Thomas Nicolls  
 The wife of Samuel Thaxter  
 The wife of Nathaniel Chubbuck  
 The wife of Joseph Joy  
 The wife of John farrow  
 The wife of Jacob Beales  
 The wife of Andrew Lane  
 The wife of Jeremiah Beale Junior

## IN THE SIXT SEATE

Josiah Lanes wife  
 The wife of Henry Ward  
 The wife of William Sprague  
 The wife of William Hillard  
 The wife of Ibrook Tower  
 The wife of John Bull  
 The wife of Mathew Witon  
 The wife of John Langlee

## IN THE SEUENTH SEATE.

- 7 The widdow Tower  
 The wife of John Wilder  
 The wife of Simon Gross  
 The wife of John Tower Junior  
 The wife of Daniel Hobart  
 The wife of Joshua Lazell  
 The wife of Francis Garnet  
 The wife of Arthur Cain

MAIDS FOR YE FORESEAT BELOW  
 IN YE EAST END, Ruth Bates

Mary Stowell Rachell Gill  
 Mary Garnet Elizabeth Cantlberry  
 Mary Lincoln Mary Lazell  
 Jemine Tower Remember Stowell  
 The daughter of Francis James  
 Patience Nicolls Hester Bates  
 Henry Wards daughter

SEATS FOR THE WOMEN ON THE  
 GALLERY AT THE EAST END WITH  
 A PART OF THE GALLERY ON THE  
 SOUTH SIDE AS FOLLOWETH—

- 1 Captaine John Thaxters wife  
 Cornet Mathew Cushings wife  
 Captaine John Jacobs wife  
 Doctor John Cutlers wife  
 John Chubbucks wife  
 James Herseys wife  
 The wife of Joshua Hobart, Mariner  
 The wife of Joshua Lincoln  
 Thewife of Thomas Lincoln Carpenter  
 The wife of Enoch Hobart  
 The wife of David Hobart  
 The wife of John Smith  
 The wife of John ffering  
 The wife of Joseph Jacob  
 The wife of Israell Leanitt  
 The wife of Daniel Cushing Junior  
 The wife of Josiah Leauitt  
 The wife of James Hawks  
 The wife of John Mayo  
 The wife of Thomas Gill  
 The wife of John Hearsey  
 The wife of Thomas Sayer  
 The wife of Thomas Marsh  
 The wife of Ephraim Nicolls  
 The wife of John Lewes  
 The wife of Israell Nicolls

THE SECOND SEATE IN THE GALLERY FOR WOMEN IN THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE MEETING HOUSE.

Robert Watermans wife  
Nathaniel Beales Junior his wife  
The wife of Daniel Lincoln Junior  
The wife of Peter Barns

IN THE SECOND SEATE IN THE GALLERY AT YE WEST END MORE OF THE YOUNG MEN.

Joseph Bate son of James bate  
Joseph Bate son of Joseph Bate  
Benjamin Bate  
Timothy Hewet  
John Garnet  
Enoch Witon  
James Garnet  
Joseph Jones

THE SECOND SEATE ON THE GALLERY AT THE EAST END OF THE HOUSE FOR YE MAIDS.

Abigail Hobart,	Lydia Hobart,
Hannah Hobart,	Mary Leauitt,
Jaell Jacob,	Hannah Hawks,
Ruth Andrewes,	Susanna Beales,
Mary Thaxter,	Rebekah Hersey,
Elizabeth Lincoln,	Hannah Leauitt,
Hannah Lincoln,	Ruth Lincoln,
Mary Beales,	Mary Witon,
Elizabeth Jacob,	Mary Beales,
Sarah Steuens,	Mary Riply,
Mary Cantlberry,	Jane Loreing,
Elizabeth Andrewes,	Mary Lincoln,
Steuens Lineolns Daughter,	
Patience Jones.	

THE SECOND SEATE IN THE FRONT GALLERY FOR YOUNG MEN.

Thomas Thaxter  
Caleb Lincoln  
Ephraim Wilder  
Samuel Lincoln Junior

Joseph Lincoln  
William Hersey Junior  
Nehemiah Leauitt  
Benjamin Johnson  
Nathan ffarrow  
Ephraim Lane  
John Beale, son of Jeremy beale  
Joseph Ford  
Mordecai Lincoln  
Simon Burr

THE SECOND SEATE IN YE GALLERY AT YE WEST END FOR YOUNG MEN.

Tho Lincoln Junior  
Ephraim Marsh  
Theophilus Cushing  
Ebenezer Lane  
John Riply Junior  
Samuell Stowell Junior  
John Hearsey  
Steuens Lazell  
John Manfield Junior  
Samuell Gill  
Isaac Wilder  
John Stowell  
David Stowell  
John Lewes  
Joshua Riply  
Joseph Loreing

THE FORESEATE ON THE GALLERY ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE MEETING HOUSE, FOR MEN.

Capt. John Thaxter  
Captaine John Jacob  
Cornet Mathew Cushing  
Ensigne Jeremiah Beales  
Thomas Andrewes  
Joshua Beales  
John Chubbuck  
Thomas Lincoln, carpenter  
Josiah Loreing  
James Hearsey  
Joshua Hobart, mariner  
Joshua Lincoln  
David Hobart  
John Smith



THE END GALLERY FOR MEN AT  
THE WEST END OF THE MEETING  
HOUSE.

Daniel Lincoln Senior  
John Beales Junior  
Steuon Lincoln  
Joseph Bates  
Samuel Thaxter  
Enoch Hobart  
Joseph Jacob  
John ffering  
Thomas Sayer  
John Hearsey  
Thomas Marsh  
Thomas Gill Junior  
Israell Leauitt  
James Hawk  
Daniel Cushing Junior  
Josiah Leauitt

Ephraim Nicolls  
Jeremiah Beale, blacksmith  
Israel Nicolls  
John Lane, carpenter  
John Mayo  
John Langlee

IN THE 3 SEATE IN THE FRONT  
GALLERY.

Jabez Wilder, John Burr,  
Nathaniel Nicolls, Mathew Cushing,  
Benjamin Jones, Lazarus Beale,  
James Ray, James Hersey,  
Thomas Loreing, Moses Hobart,  
Joseph Jones Junior,  
Thomas Andrewes  
Daniel Lincoln Junior,  
Dauid Jacob,  
Samuel Thaxter.

The foregoing list is of exceeding interest. We can see in it, at a glance, those to whom seats were assigned in the new Meeting-house and who were contemporaries. It embraces a large number of the first settlers of the town, whose descendants to several generations, and for nearly two centuries, have gathered for public worship under the same roof.

This list gives almost a complete census of the town in its original limits. There were men among them who knew the Pilgrims of Plymouth; and it is a pleasant thought that some of the Pilgrims probably attended public worship in the new Meeting-house, and listened to the preaching of Rev. John Norton. There were men there who had suffered in person and estate from the depredations of the Indians, and some who bore arms in the war against Philip of Pokanoket, and were present in the great Narraganset Fight, in December, 1675.



The appearance of the Meeting-house itself, when completed, must have been nearly the same as it now is, and of which the View facing the Title of the Appendix gives a correct idea.

In the interior there were galleries on one side, and at both ends. The pulpit was on the North East side of the house. There was probably no plastering upon the walls, and there was no ceiling. The whole interior was open, showing the old oaken rafters and braces which supported the roof. The walls, both outside and inside, were clapboarded. The seats were of oak, arranged in rows or sections as indicated by the "Seating of the House," and there appears to have been one pew, which was occupied by the widow of the first minister and the wife of the second. The Deacons also had their separate seat. Matthew Hawke was permitted to occupy a seat with them, perhaps to facilitate his taking down in short-hand the sermons of the preacher, a service which he was accustomed to perform.

It will be quite an interesting problem for an ingenious antiquary to solve,—to arrange the seats of the Meeting-house as they were,—and to be able to locate the occupants in their proper order and position, when assembled for public worship. It will then need but a slight effort of the imagination to picture the striking scene.

It will be recollected, that the town at this time, constituted but one parish, and so continued until after the close of Mr. Norton's ministry. He died Oct. 3, 1716. Before that date and so early as 1713, the inhabitants of Cohasset began to agitate the subject of forming a second precinct. This was finally accomplished, and Cohasset was made the Second Precinct of Hingham, Nov. 21, 1717. Having erected a Meeting-house and obtained the privileges of a parish, Rev. Nehemiah Hobart was ordained their Pastor, Dec. 13, 1721.

In consequence of the creation of the Second Precinct, the remaining inhabitants of Hingham not included within the limits of Cohasset, composed the First Parish or Precinct and organized as such, March 6, 1720-1. From that date, we have full and correct records to which we can now resort for much of the subsequent history of our Ancient Meeting-house.

The building of a new Meeting-house within the limits of the town would seem to have relieved the pressure for room in the old house, but the contrary appears to have been the result. From the commencement of the Parish records, to 1729, there appears to have been constantly agitated the question of increasing the accommodations of the worshippers. Many votes were passed, at various

meetings, in relation to building pews; enlarging the galleries, by bringing them forward; extending galleries from the sides to the pulpit; building another tier of galleries; putting pews over the stairs, etc.: none of which seem to have been carried into effect.

On the 31st day of March, 1729, the Parish voted, "That there be an addition made to the back part of the Meeting House and that the same do not exceed fourteen feet wide or back." This enlargement was completed during that or the following year, for on Aug. 24th, 1730, it was voted "that the pulpit should be moved back to the northwardly side of addition to the meeting house,—39 to 35." The cost of the addition was £296, 11s. 1d. Subsequently, various votes were passed in relation to further finishing the house.

Jan. 19, 1731, it was voted that "no part of the meeting house should be pewed."

In May, 1731, voted, "That the remainder part of the meeting house should be sealed overhead and that the two posts standing in the fore seats should be wrought into a suitable form." The cost of "sealing overhead" was £121, 1s. 9d. In March, 1731-2, "That there should be a new belfry erected on the top of the meeting house."—Cost, £34, 14s. 8d.

We have found in the Parish records the following votes:

Sept. 1734. The Committee to see to putting in new windows "be and are hereby further impowered to clapboard the outside of the same" (Meeting-house) "where they shall think it needful, and also to plaster with lime so much of the inside of the s<sup>d</sup> house where it is now clapboarded as they shall think proper." £100 raised to defray expense.

March, 1739. Permission refused Elijah Beal to build a pew over the women's gallery.

May, 1740, "Not to dispose of any ground in the meeting house to erect pews on."

June, 1752. The question whether the Meeting-house shall be pewed "in any method what so ever," passed in the negative.

March 12, 1755. "That an addition be made and, finished at the South Southwest end of this house fourteen feet in length, and that all proper repairs be made to the old part of s<sup>d</sup> house, windows, glazing, &c., and that the pulpit be removed into the centre of the whole length when the addition is made and that all the seats be removed agreeable thereto and that a suitable Bellfree be erected and finished on the top of the s<sup>d</sup> house and that the pew ground proposed in a plan now exhibited by Benjamin Lincoln be disposed of to the highest bidders, for the payment of the whole cost."

A committee was chosen "to carry on and finish the whole of y<sup>e</sup>. s<sup>d</sup> addition and repairs as soon as may be."

At a meeting in October, 1755, among other votes passed, was one "not to build a new Pulpit." This vote was reconsidered; and a vote passed to "order the same to be built." The Committee on Repairs was "impowered to cause the pews to be forthwith erected."

This action of the Parish seems to have hastened the work. The house was enlarged as voted, a new pulpit constructed, a new belfry erected on the top of the house, and the pews were built, viz.: two rows of square pews on all sides of the house, excepting the spaces occupied by the pulpit and the aisles leading from the entrances, and those between the rows of pews. There was a pew in front of the pulpit, known as the elders pew, or pew for elderly men, and also an enclosed seat or pew in front of the elders pew, facing the broad aisle for the use of the Deacons of the church.

The central space or body of the house was filled with long oaken seats, for the occupancy of males, on one side of the broad aisle, and of females on the other. These seats were separated from the pews by aisles. The galleries were changed and located as they now are, oaken seats were placed in them, and the south-western gallery assigned to males and the north-eastern gallery to females.

The pulpit was built by Ebenezer Lincoln. The work "about the pews," was done by Elijah Beal and two boys, (probably his apprentices) Thomas Joy, Joseph Stowers and Caleb Bates. They were employed nearly all the time from the first of November, 1755, until the middle of January, 1756.

This last addition to the Meeting-house established its dimensions as they now are, viz: seventy-three feet, by fifty-five feet.

1756, January 6. At a Parish meeting, "the forward pew adjoining to the stairs leading up to the pulpit" was reserved for the use of the minister and his family for the time being. At the same meeting, various other votes were passed in relation to the sale of the pews. The Committee on Repairs was "impowered to determine upon a certain sum at which each pew should be put up at in the sale of them to the highest bidders." This meeting was adjourned to the 20th of January, when the pews were sold successfully, "Captain John Thaxter being by the committee appointed Vendue Master." A full account of the sale is recorded in the Parish records.

It is an interesting fact that the strength and growth of the Parish justified and required this enlarged accommodation for the use of the inhabitants within so few years after the formation of a new Parish

embracing in its limits the South part of the town. The subject of establishing a new Parish was proposed so early as 1738, and was pursued by the members who resided in that section of the town, with great zeal and ultimate success. The Third Parish was set off March 25, 1745-6, and included more than one-half the territory of the whole Parish. On the incorporation of Cohasset, in 1770, the *Third* became the *Second* parish in *Hingham*. Their first minister, Rev. David Shute, D. D., was ordained, Dec. 10, 1746.

The separation of the second precinct, (Cohasset,) in 1717, and of the third, (South Hingham,) in 1745-6, did not diminish the interest of the members of the First Parish in maintaining their old house of worship, but on the contrary, in both instances, gave fresh impulses to enlarge it and improve its condition. Both the additions were made during the ministry of Dr. Gay.

From 1756 to 1791 no further changes were made in the Meeting-house. In 1778, March 23d, it was voted not to act on the 4th article in the warrant, which was to see if the Parish would dispose of any spot in the Meeting-house for pews.

In 1791, at a meeting in March, a committee of nine was chosen to report at the annual meeting, in April, on the subject of granting additional space for pews. The committee reported in favor of appropriating a space eight feet deep on each side of the back part of the body seats for that purpose, whereby eight pews might be constructed four feet deep and nine feet long. The report was accepted and the pews were built as proposed and sold to members of the Parish.

In 1791, during the ministry of Dr. Henry Ware, (who was ordained pastor Oct. 24, 1787,) a disposition was manifested to make material changes in the form and appearance of the house. Thus at a meeting in June, it was voted "that the meeting-house be repaired in the following manner, viz.: that the roof be carried up to a point the same pitch as the southwest roof is over the centre of the house; and that the ridge extend from the northwest side of the house to the southeast, the whole width of the house; and that where the porch now stands a tower be built on which the bell shall be hung, and such work on the top of the tower as shall hereafter be ordered; and that a small porch be built at the southwest door; and that the house shall be painted all over except the roof; and that stairs be built in the tower to lead into the gallery as they now do." A committee was chosen to superintend the work. In February, 1792, it was voted "that a tower be built at the southwest side of the meeting-house for



the bell to hang on." And in March following it was voted "that the meeting-house roof be taken off and a proper pitch roof made to correspond with the tower that is to be built and to have proper covings." Afterwards it was voted "to leave it to the judgment of the committee to form the roof as they shall judge best." The committee were Gen. Benjamin Lincoln, Dea. Joseph Thaxter, Col. Charles Cushing, Caleb Bates, and David Andrews. At the meeting in April, 1792, the committee reported that they found the top of the Meeting-house so defective that it was not best to repair it without taking off the roof, and their report was accepted. But in August, following, it was voted that the vote for taking off the roof "be dissolved." A still more important vote was passed at the same meeting, which was as follows: "Voted to take down the meeting-house and build a new one similar to a plan exhibited in the meeting which is on file, 60 in favor of it and 28 against it."

Committees were appointed to perfect the plan and appraise the pews.

In November, 1792, the Parish fortunately abandoned the plan of building a new Meeting-house and passed these votes: "Voted, not to take down the meeting-house and build a new one on any principles." It was also voted, "to repair the meeting-house in its present form."

In April, 1793, a committee chosen in March, to consider the question of repairs, "offered the following statement for consideration, viz.: That the under pinning be well secured by a wall without, and the middle to be filled up with earth; that the northeast end and part of both sides be new silled; that there be new steps at the southwest door; and that all the doors be repaired; that the northeast end be clapboarded and the other repaired; that there be covings under the eaves of the front, rear, and southwest end; and also the porch be shingled, and that of the northeast end repaired; that a new roof be made where it is now leaded, and that there be banisters round it; and a new frame and wheel for the bell; the steeple repaired, the roof secured from spreading by two beams being placed across in the garret from front to rear and secured with iron clasps, and one lengthwise in the same manner; the posts in Jonathan Lincoln's pew secured at the bottom; the ceiling overhead white-washed, and the walls of the front, rear, and southwest end be painted on the outside."

The committee estimated the cost and gave as their opinion that it would not exceed £200.

This report was accepted and a committee consisting of "Jacob Leavitt, Hawk Fearing, Noah Hearsey," chosen "to prepare the stuff and to compleat the repairs." This work was done and the ancient edifice saved.

1793, July 22. It was voted "to build a porch at the southwest door of the meeting-house, and that the porch be ten feet square on the ground, about ten feet post, a false door with a piedmont in front, a door on each side, and finished as is usual for a porch of that kind to be finished."

It was also voted "to paint the inside of the Meeting-house, (except the body seats,) to include the pew under the pulpit and the Deacon's seat, to whitewash the walls and repair the plastering."

The whole expense of the repairs and improvements made in 1793, was £278, 5s. 6d.

1799, March 11. It was voted "to build 4 pews on the women's side in the body of the meeting-house," and a committee was chosen to procure the pews to be built on the best terms they can and conformable to the pews last built, being confined to the 3 hindmost seats." And in November, of the same year, it was voted "to build four pews in body seats on the men's side conformable to those last built on the women's side." At the same time, it was voted to build five pews on each of the side galleries in front.

In 1804, May, it was voted to erect pews in the galleries back of those already made in said galleries.

All the alterations, additions and pews which have been mentioned, from 1791 to 1804, were made and constructed during the ministry of Dr. Ware.

In 1817, May 17, it was voted, "to pew the remainder of the body seats on the lower floor in the Meeting house and to reduce the present Parish pews, in width, so as to erect five tiers of pews on the whole ground." "To be built before the first day of March next."

1818, March 3, "Voted that the Parish Committee make such alterations in the Elderly seat as will make it convenient for the Moderator and other officers on publick meetings."

Voted, "That the four front pews on the lower floor be left for the accommodation of the elderly people if necessary."

1818, March 21, Voted, "That the Steeple of the Meeting-house and Bell frame and all the top of said house be put in thorough repair," and August 31 of the same year, Voted, "That the Spire be raised eighteen inches higher than it formerly was."

In 1819, the Parish sold two of their pews on the floor of the house to members of the Parish. The remainder of the Parish

pews were retained by the Parish, being seventeen on the lower floor and all the gallery pews, which were let from time to time, by auction, to such persons as the Parish approved.

In 1824, March 9, an alteration was authorized to be made in the front gallery, by making it in the form of an arc of a circle for the convenience of the Choir. In making this alteration, two pews were constructed, one at each end of the front gallery, which were sold to individuals and purchased of them by the Parish, as appears by a report of the Parish Committee made in 1844.

In 1828, a committee made a report to the Parish, which was accepted, and in which it was recommended, that the pews in front of the pulpit should be removed; that the house should be painted inside; the walls and ceiling whitewashed; that curtains be procured for the pulpit windows; curtains be placed in front of the singers' gallery; and new cushions furnished for the pulpit and desk.

In 1854, the Parish Committee were authorized to cause eight new pews to be built in the Eastern gallery; and in 1855, the same number was ordered to be built in the Western gallery. In 1857, four additional pews were ordered to be built in each of the above mentioned galleries.

In 1858, March 9, at the annual meeting of the Parish, a communication was received from the "Ladies' Benevolent Society" of the Parish, in relation to repairs on the Meeting-house and tendering donations in money to effect the object.

The Parish Committee were instructed to confer with the ladies in order to carry their propositions into effect. Several hundred dollars, a part of which was the proceeds of a Fair, conducted under the direction of the Benevolent Society, were given to the Parish which was expended by the Parish Committee in repairing and beautifying the house. At the annual meeting in 1860, it was voted, "That the Parish present their grateful acknowledgments to the Ladies' Benevolent Society, for the very liberal donations of money which that Society has made on two recent occasions, towards repairing and beautifying the Meeting-house."

In 1859, four pews had been constructed, by order of the Parish Committee, in the front gallery; and in 1868, four more pews had been built in the same gallery, making the whole number of gallery pews, thirty-two.

We come now to a period in the history of the Meeting-house of unusual interest and importance.



## NEW PEWS AND EXTENSIVE REPAIRS.

At the annual Parish meeting, held March 10, 1869, it was voted, "That a committee be chosen to consider the matter of reseating the lower floor of the Church," and ascertain the probable expense of a new floor and new pews, and report to the Parish at their next meeting.

Voted, That said committee consist of five, and that the same be nominated by the moderator, (Gen. Luther Stephenson, Jun.) Warren A. Hersey, Ebed S. Ripley, William Fearing, 2d, E. Waters Burr and Henry C. Harding were named by the moderator and accepted by the Parish as said committee.

Voted, That the members of the Parish Committee be added to the above committee. The members of the Parish Committee were John K. Corthell, Israel Whitcomb and Quincy Bicknell.

1869, April 7, at an adjourned Parish meeting, the foregoing committee presented a report on the subject committed to them. In this report, the committee stated that the floor of the Meeting-house was "in a very advanced state of decomposition," and that it was the unanimous opinion of the committee, that for its preservation, a new floor was expedient, that the construction of a new floor involved the necessity of removing the old pews and constructing new ones; and that the prosperity and growth of the Society required that a Vestry be constructed under the "Church." The estimated cost of doing the work, materials, value of the old pews, repairing foundation and contingencies, was \$7,500, without a Vestry; and with a Vestry, \$10,000.

This report was accepted excepting that part of it which recommended a Vestry.

A committee was chosen to carry the report as amended and accepted into effect. The following named gentlemen were chosen to compose the committee, viz: Israel Whitcomb, John K. Corthell, Quincy Bicknell, E. Waters Burr, Warren A. Hersey, Ebed S. Ripley and William Fearing, 2d.

The committee were directed "to have the old pews appraised and also the new ones when completed."

1869, June 11, a special Parish meeting was called to consider the subject of repairs and alterations with a view to a more detailed

report of those which should be regarded as necessary or expedient, also on the subject of furnishing and heating the Meeting-house,—with estimates of the cost of the same.

The whole subject was referred to the committee of seven appointed at the last meeting, with a request that they report to the Parish at the earliest day practicable.

1869, June 21, a special meeting of the Parish was held to hear the report of the committee and to act thereon.

The report was very full and elaborate, and was arranged in eighteen sections, of which the following is an abstract :

SECTION 1. The committee deem it expedient that the Choir and Organ be located upon the platform on the Easterly side of the pulpit.

SECT. 2. The South-eastern porch to be repaired, new sills, floor, stairs and doors. A chimney to be built from the basement to the chimney in the "attic." Stairs from the porch to basement under the gallery stairs.

SECT. 3. The walls of the whole house to be clapboarded anew.

SECT. 4. New windows with plain glass, (10x15) and blinds, or with stained glass, without blinds.

SECT. 5. The outer walls to be painted with two coats of paint. The painting of the spire and the gilding of the vane and ball to be included.

SECT. 6. Three sides of the roof to be shingled. The committee are unable to state the extent to which repairs should be made.

SECT. 7. The lower and unfinished part of the posts in the interior of the "Church" should be finished in such a manner as to conform in appearance to the upper part of the same.

SECT. 8. The committee state their objections to stoves for heating the house; and propose two furnaces in brick, having two registers or one register each: or two portable furnaces with two registers, or one register each. An estimate of the expense was given.

SECT. 9. The purchase of new carpets for the lower floor of the house, cushions of uniform character for the pews, and such pulpit furniture and drapery as may be deemed necessary, is recommended.

SECT. 10. A flight of stairs on each side of the pulpit is proposed.

SECT. 11. If section 1 is approved, the committee ask for authority to place seats or erect pews in the gallery recently occupied by the Choir, and to dispose of the same for the best interest of the Parish.

SECT. 12. The committee recommend that the grounds around the "Church" be graded to conform to the foundation of the same.

SECT. 13. The committee proposed that the expenses incurred by repairs on the outside of the Meeting-house, viz.: clapboarding, painting, shingling the roof, and necessary repairs on the spire, and also the cost of windows be paid by a Parish tax to be levied and paid in five equal annual instalments.

At the said meeting, the report was taken up and considered by sections with the following result:

Sections 1, 2 and 3 were severally accepted without amendment. Section 4 was accepted with an amendment "that there be 37 new windows with diamond sashes and plain glass." Sections 5, 6 and 7 were severally accepted without amendment. Section 8 was referred to the committee to act in the premises as they think best. Sections 9 and 10 were accepted without amendment. Section 11 was accepted after striking out the clause in relation to the disposal of pews. Section 12 was accepted and referred to the committee to act as they may deem best. Section 13. Voted that no action be taken thereon at this meeting.

At this meeting the Parish Committee offered a report in relation to the sale of pews which was read for information and laid on the table for future consideration.

At a special meeting of the Parish held August 9, 1869, the report, read for information at the last meeting, in relation to the appraisal of the pews, their sale by auction and the conditions of sale, as well as the conditions to be inserted in the deeds of the same by the Parish Committee, was considered and accepted with an amendment limiting the sale to those now being erected on the lower floor of the house. The conditions to be inserted in the deeds of pews, being printed in a form prepared by the Parish Committee, are in the possession of every pew-holder and are therefore not reprinted.

It was also voted, that the Committee on Repairs be requested to carry out the provisions of the vote of the 7th of April, last, in relation to the appraisal of pews, and which directed the committee to have the old pews appraised, and also the new ones when completed.

A plan of the old pews is here inserted with their numbers, by which, and their position, persons interested can recall to their minds their occupants and the general appearance of the congregation.

1869, August 17, a Parish meeting was held, at which it was voted that the pews in the galleries be offered for sale at the same time as those on the lower floor and on the same terms and conditions. It was also voted, that the Treasurer be requested to offer the pews for sale on Wednesday, the eighth day of September next.



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# OF THE FIRST PARISH, REMOVED IN 1869.

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80. PEW REMOVED &  
STOVE INTRODUCED 1822.

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78. 82.

61. 68.

62. 67.

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64. 65.

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. It was also voted that the Parish Committee be requested to open the Meeting-house for public worship as soon as it shall be completed and dedicated.

The work on the Meeting-house was completed before the day appointed for its rededication and the sale of the pews.

The following extracts are taken from an article published in the *Hingham Journal*, written by a member of the Committee on Repairs, and contain some facts which have not been mentioned in the preceding pages.

*From the Hingham Journal of July 7, 1869.*

By a notice in our advertising columns, it will be seen that the pews in the Meeting-house of the First Parish, in this town, will be sold by auction, on Wednesday next, at two o'clock in the afternoon. If any apology be necessary for calling more particular attention to this sale than is given by the advertisement, it must be found in the interest which not only the members of this Parish but many people beyond the limits of this Parish have felt in the matter since the work of repairs was commenced upon this ancient edifice. This interest has had something more than a local character, for wherever the descendants of those who nearly two centuries ago erected this house, are scattered throughout the whole of our wide-spread domain, there is some knowledge, traditional or otherwise, in relation to the peculiar history of this old house ; and the thousands of strangers who have at different times visited us have carried away lasting impressions of the unique style of building once familiar to the fathers, but now of rare occurrence.

There is no other house for public worship now standing in New England, which was built for that purpose, and which has been in constant use for so long a period of time ; perhaps none in the whole country.

\* \* \* \* \*

Several articles have appeared in the columns of this paper during the time the work of repair has been going on, evincing no small degree of interest in relation to the manner in which the committee, who had the work in charge, proposed to accomplish it, and it is not surprising that therein fears were expressed that something would be done in the progress of the work to mar the general character of the building ; and the committee ought to feel under some obligation to this expression of public feeling, in restraining any tendency in this direction, if unhappily it had any foothold among them. It was no

mere desire for change or to conform to modern fashion of architecture, which led to the work of repair, but an apparent necessity for making essential repairs had been felt for some years. This at last led to an examination of the floor of the house, and this examination revealed the fact that if the Parish wished to preserve their house they must forthwith commence the work of repairs, and that nothing short of an entire new floor would answer the purpose. This rendered the removal of the pews necessary, and the removal involved their destruction.

\* \* \* \* \*

There were many associations connected with those old pews, full of the deepest interest to those occupying them, and nothing but the sternest necessity could have reconciled the owners to their sacrifice. Those old square pews were not put in the house when it was first built, but were placed there when the last addition was made in 1755.

\* \* \* \* \*

It will be noticed that the new windows have the diamond shaped glass,—this, too, approximates to a restoration of the original windows, the remains of one of which were found on removing some of the floors. It was made of leaden bars, crossed in the shape of a diamond, according to the fashion of those times.

The present condition and aspect of the Meeting-house are something as follows: A cellar has been excavated under the house, of sufficient depth, in which are placed two brick furnaces for heating purposes. The new sills and large floor timbers and the columns supporting the same are of the best Southern pine; the floor joists are of spruce, and the floor boards are of pine. The pews are made of chestnut, with black walnut ends and mouldings; furnished with cushions, and carpeted uniformly with the aisles, the prevailing color of the cushions and carpets being green. The pews were made by Daymon & Rice, of East Weymouth.

The pulpit is the one built in 1755, with some alterations. It is of pine, and painted. In 1828 it was repainted by the late Col. Charles Lane, in imitation of mahogany. This painting is preserved, and it is highly creditable to the taste and skill for which, we all remember, Col. Lane was so justly celebrated. The alteration of the entrance to the south porch, and the change of the stairway therein, render access to the house and galleries from that direction more convenient than formerly.

An Organ was placed in the singing gallery about three years ago. This, with the position of the Choir, has been removed to a platform

on the left of the pulpit, and pews have been put in the singing gallery.

The ground has been lowered around the house to a depth of about two feet, so as to show the stone foundation. The stone work was laid by Charles E. Colbath, and it was finished by pointing, in the best style of that art, by Warren A. Hersey.

Under the south-west corner stone is deposited a leaden box, containing appropriate documents and memorials connected with the history of this parish, and also containing an account of the present work done on this house. These were prepared under the direction of the Hon. Solomon Lincoln. Among the documents are three small books of autographs of the six ministers of the parish, and of men prominent in the history of the town and parish. These were prepared by George Lincoln, and they are correctly and beautifully executed. The external appearance of the house is very little changed, if we except that slight change which a different color to the paint gives it. In the interior the change is more marked, arising from the difference in the style of the pews from that of the old ones. The outside painting was done by Cross & Reed, and the inside painting by J. & S. Sprague, and it seems to be very well done.

The whole work of repairs and alterations has been carried on under the immediate superintendence of David Leavitt, who furnished the plans, and who has carried the work through in a very thorough and satisfactory manner.

And now the work being finished and the house ready for use, the Parish and the Pastor propose, on Wednesday forenoon next, in accordance with time-honored custom, to rededicate it to the purposes for which it was erected, and for which it has hitherto been used—to the worship of Almighty God. The circumstances attending the rededication are of more than usual interest. This service should connect and consecrate the work of the present through nearly two centuries of time with all that is holy and sacred in the memory of the past. The footsteps of six generations of holy men and women re-echo to our own as we thread these ancient portals;—the very walls speak to us with the entranced sounds of many voices once joined in hymns of praise to their Maker.

We can see the very spot where the amiable and pious Norton stood as he exhorted the people. We gaze into the very pulpit consecrated by the wisdom and piety of the venerable Gay, and made memorable by the Christian attainments and learning of the elder Ware; while at the present time it embraces the labors of two

Pastors, one living at a greater age than even the venerable Gay attained, and the other just completing the three score years and ten.

In the afternoon, after the dedication, the pews in the Meeting-house are to be sold, from the proceeds of which the quite large costs of all these repairs are to be paid ; and the opportunity is offered to any one of obtaining a pew in this house on very liberal terms—an opportunity not likely to occur again.

And now the public, which has held this Parish and its committee to the most strict account, to the bar of its opinion, in everything connected with the preservation of all that was venerable and consecrated in their house, will have the means of showing the extent of its interest by a tangible and certain measure, and we trust the result will show that this public sentiment and interest will be found true to all the just and honorable tests to which it may be subjected ; and we wish the Parish may realize an amount from the sale of their pews exceeding their most sanguine expectations.

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## REDEDICATION.

At the meeting held August 17, 1869, the Committee on Repairs and the Rev. Mr. Lincoln were appointed a committee to make arrangements for the dedication. It was also voted, that an addition of three be made to the above named committee ; and Hon. Albert Fearing, Hon. Solomon Lincoln and Henry C. Harding were added.

This committee made arrangements for the rededication in conformity to a previous vote of the Parish.

We subjoin the Order of Services on that occasion :

ORDER OF SERVICES

AT THE

RE-OPENING

OF THE

MEETING-HOUSE OF THE FIRST PARISH,

IN HINGHAM,

ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8TH, 1869.

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I. ANTHEM.

“BEAUTIFUL are thy towers, O Zion,  
 Lovely in their strength thy walls and stately palaces  
 For thy Shepherd loveth thee,  
 He shall comfort thee in every danger,  
 He shall defend thee in the day of trouble,  
 His sun shall direct thee by day,  
 His stars shall hold good watch over thee by night.  
 Lovely art thou, O Zion,  
 Firm are thy towers and thy lofty domes,  
 For thy good Shepherd loveth thee,  
 He shall guard thee, He shall defend thee,  
 Thy foes shall not lead thee captive,  
 And thou shalt sing his praise  
 Forevermore.” *Amen.*

II. INVOCATION AND READING OF SCRIPTURES.

By REV. JOHN D. WELLS, of Quincy.

III. HYMN. “THE HOUSE OUR FATHERS BUILT TO GOD.”—*Emerson.*

TUNE—*China.*

(*The Congregation are requested to join in singing this hymn.*)

WE love the venerable house  
 Our fathers built to God;  
 In heaven are kept their grateful vows,  
 Their dust endears the sod.

Here holy thoughts a light have shed  
 From many a radiant face,  
 And prayers of tender hope have spread  
 A perfume through the place.

And anxious hearts have pondered here  
 The mystery of life,  
 And prayed the Eternal Spirit clear  
 Their doubts and aid their strife.

They live with God, their homes are dust;  
 But here their children pray,  
 And, in this fleeting lifetime, trust  
 To find the narrow way.

#### IV. SERMON.

By REV. CALVIN LINCOLN.

#### V. ANTHEM. "ON OPENING A PLACE FOR WORSHIP."—*Montgomery.*

LORD of hosts to thee we raise  
 Here a house of prayer and praise;  
 Thou thy people's heart prepare  
 Here to meet for praise and prayer.

Let the living here be fed  
 With thy word, the heavenly bread;  
 Here in hope of glory blest,  
 May the dead be laid to rest.

Here to thee a temple stand,  
 While the sea shall gird the land;  
 Here reveal thy mercy sure,  
 While the sun and moon endure.

Hallelujah!—earth and sky  
 To the joyful sound reply;  
 Hallelujah!—hence ascend  
 Prayer and praise till time shall end.



## VI. PRAYER OF DEDICATION,

By REV. JOSEPH OSGOOD, of Cohasset.

## VII. ADDRESSES,

By REV. EZRA S. GANNETT, D.D., of Boston, and others.

VIII. DEDICATION HYMN.—*Bryant.*

O Thou, whose own vast temple stands,  
 Built over earth and sea,  
 Accept the walls, that human hands  
 Have raised to worship thee.

Lord, from thine inmost glory send,  
 Within these courts to bide,  
 The peace that dwelleth, without end,  
 Securely by thy side.

May erring minds that worship here  
 Be taught the better way,  
 And they who mourn, and they who fear,  
 Be strengthened as they pray.

May faith grow firm, and love grow warm,  
 And pure devotion rise,  
 While round these hallowed walls the storm  
 Of earth-born passion dies.

## IX. CONCLUDING PRAYER.

## X. DISMISSION HYMN.

TUNE—*Old Hundred.**(In which the Congregation are requested to join.)*

## XI. BENEDICTION.



The services of rededication were of a highly interesting character. Notwithstanding the extreme heat, the house was well filled at an early hour. Clergymen of the town and neighboring towns of different denominations were present. The venerable senior pastor of the society, Rev. Joseph Richardson, then in his ninety-second year, with his aged wife, occupied seats on the platform near the pulpit, facing the congregation. In consequence of the infirmities of age, he had, within a few years, ceased from his ministerial labors, but on the present occasion, although blind and well stricken in years, he determined to be present, and manifested a strong interest in all the services and proceedings. The discourse by Rev. Calvin Lincoln, the associate pastor, is printed in this pamphlet and needs no encomium of ours. It is not improper to say that it was characteristic of its author. It was a plain, simple, frank exposition of sentiment, appropriate in its historical allusions, and delivered in an effective style of eloquence. It gave great satisfaction to those who enjoyed the privilege of hearing it, and will be read with equal pleasure and profit. The prayer of dedication by the Rev. Joseph Osgood, of the former "second precinct of Hingham," was comprehensive, appropriate and impressive. Rev. Ezra Stiles Gannett, D. D., and Rev. George W. Hepworth were present by invitation, and addressed the audience. Dr. Gannett threw his whole soul into the occasion. He was full of life, energy and spirit. He entered into all the feelings of his friend and classmate, the associate pastor, and spoke in that flowing and fervent style of eloquence which seemed almost like inspiration. The fact that his honored father, Rev. Caleb Gannett, was ordained in this house more than one hundred years ago, to be pastor of a church in Nova Scotia, was spoken of with a tenderness and pathos which is seldom surpassed.

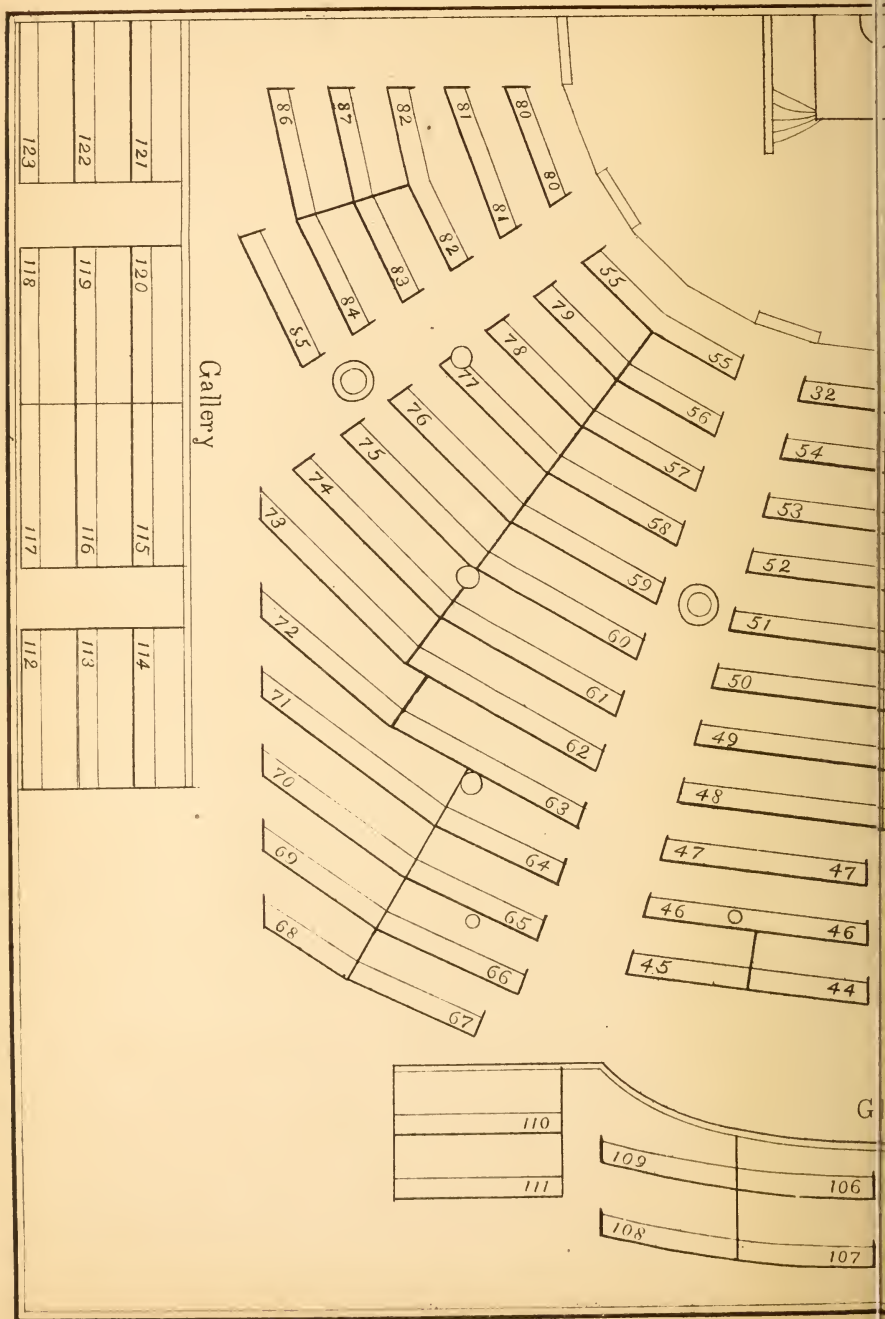
Mr. Hepworth also was exceedingly animated and interesting. He spoke with great rapidity and it seemed almost impossible to catch his ideas in their rapid flow, yet expressed with great felicity and power.

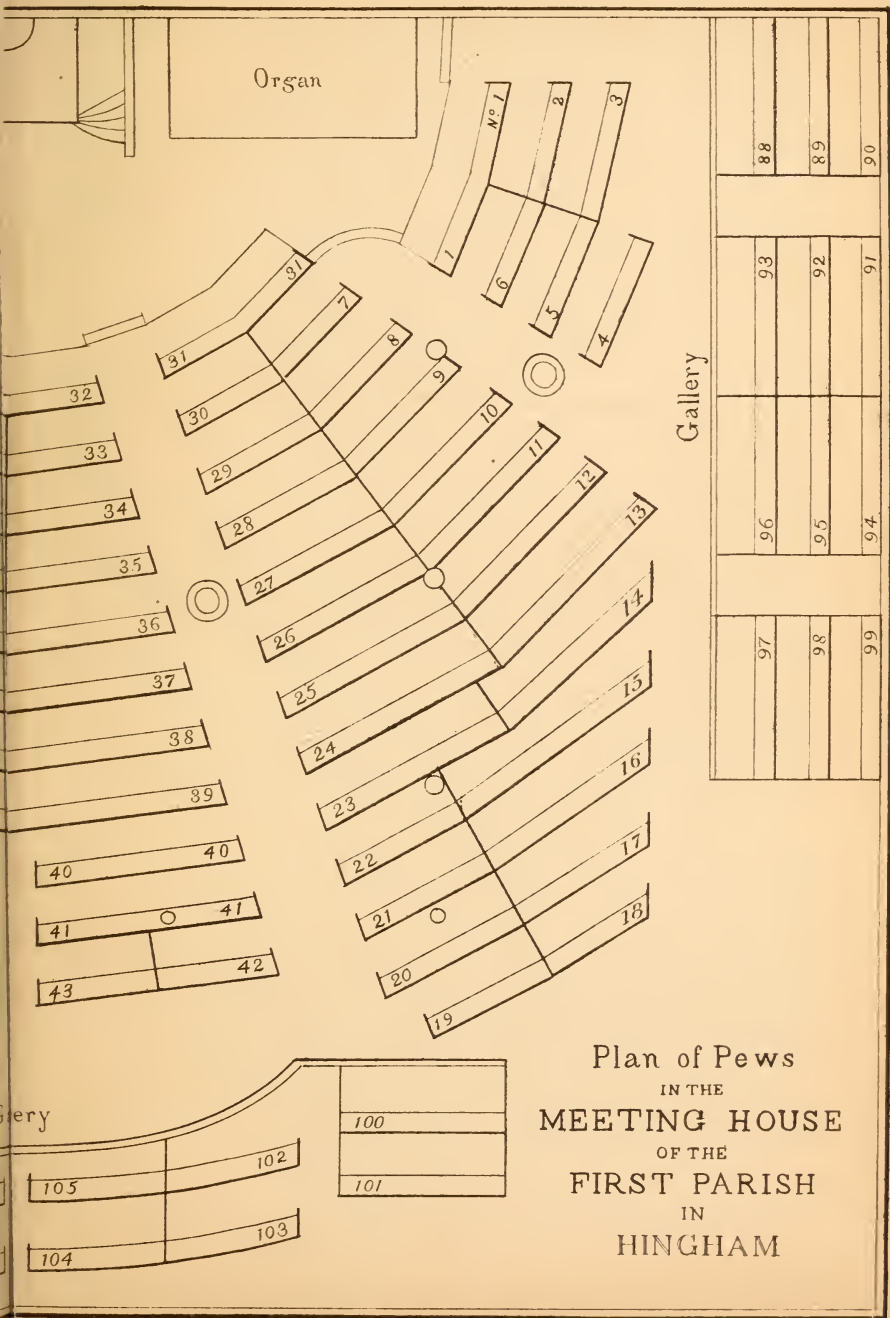
It is matter of regret that a reporter was not employed to take down the language of the eloquent speakers.

The performances were all interesting and not so prolonged as to be tedious. The beautiful poetry of Emerson, Montgomery and Bryant was sung in strains which were appropriate, and with fine musical effect.

At noon, refreshments were served to the audience, in Loring Hall, which presented an attractive scene. Ample tables were loaded with an elegant collation, embellished with choice fruits and flowers, and









gracefully distributed by a select committee of young ladies of the Parish. Such was the enthusiasm of the occasion that Dr. Gannett could not, if he would, suppress another burst of his burning eloquence, and he was followed by others who had caught his spirit and gave utterance to their best thoughts expressed with unusual spirit and eloquence. The services of that day will long be remembered by those who had the good fortune to be present.

At the close of the day, some solicitude was felt for the safety of the ancient edifice, when a severe hurricane arose which prostrated buildings and many ornamental trees in this and other sections of the country, but its frame of oak sustained it throughout the violence of the tempest with very slight injury.

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## SALE OF PEWS.

In the afternoon of the same day, those interested in the sale of pews assembled at the Meeting-house, and Col. Charles W. Seymour having been selected as auctioneer, the sale over appraisal commenced. The bidding was spirited, and the results of the sale were highly satisfactory.

On that and a subsequent day, all the pews on the floor of the house, as well as those in the galleries, were sold. The proceeds of the sales exceeded in amount the cost of the repairs and alterations which was a little more than thirteen thousand dollars. There were a few changes of ownership after the public sales, but in order that the names of the pew-holders, as finally settled, may be preserved for convenient reference, they are here inserted, together with a plan of the new pews on the floor and in the galleries, with the numbers of the pews corresponding with those prefixed to the names of the pew-holders on the next two pages.

## PEW-HOLDERS

IN THE

MEETING-HOUSE OF THE FIRST PARISH IN HINGHAM.

JULY 1, 1873.

- |                               |                                     |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Parish—for Singers.        | 39. Joseph W. Philbrook.            |
| 2. Ebed L. Ripley.            | 40. Hawkes and Morris Fearing.      |
| 3. Seth Sprague, 2d.          | 41. John R. Brewer.                 |
| 4. Josiah Sprague.            | 42. Lincoln Jacob.                  |
| 5. Thomas J. Leavitt.         | 43. Elizabeth R. Hersey.            |
| 6. David A. Hersey.           | 44. Lydia Sprague.                  |
| 7. Mary Y. C. Farmer.         | 45. Lydia and Mary Lincoln.         |
| 8. Henry Stephenson.          | 46. Nehemiah Ripley.                |
| 9. Charles Leavitt.           | 47. William Fearing, 2d.            |
| 10. David Leavitt.            | 48. E. Waters Burr.                 |
| 11. Levi Corthell.            | 49. Charles Siders.                 |
| 12. Sidney Sprague.           | 50. Solomon Lincoln.                |
| 13. Quincy Bicknell.          | 51. John Stephenson.                |
| 14. Luther Stephenson, Jr.    | 52. Henry C. Harding.               |
| 15. Elijah C. Corthell.       | 53. Caleb B. Marsh.                 |
| 16. Warren A. Hersey.         | 54. Isaac Easterbrook.              |
| 17. Justin Ripley.            | 55. Calvin Lincoln.                 |
| 18. Albert Fearing.           | 56. Jairus B. Lincoln.              |
| 19. Seth L. Burr.             | 57. Weston Lewis.                   |
| 20. Alanson Crosby.           | 58. Alexander Lincoln.              |
| 21. John W. Peirce.           | 59. Emily Fearing.                  |
| 22. Starkes Whiton.           | 60. Joshua Leavitt.                 |
| 23. Fearing Burr.             | 61. Albert Fearing.                 |
| 24. Charles Howard.           | 62. Jason W. and George F. Whitney. |
| 25. Ezra Stephenson.          | 63. Charles T. Burr.                |
| 26. John K. Corthell.         | 64. Mary E. and Adeline L. Riddle.  |
| 27. Emma and Arthur A. Burr.  | 65. Loring Jacob.                   |
| 28. Peter N. Sprague.         | 66. Moses Cross.                    |
| 29. Pyam C. Burr.             | 67. Henry Trowbridge.               |
| 30. Susan and Martha Lincoln. | 68. Samuel and Leavitt Sprague.     |
| 31. Parish—for Singers.       | 69. Joseph Easterbrook.             |
| 32. Parish—for Singers.       | 70. Caleb Beal.                     |
| 33. Albert Leavitt.           | 71. Charles E. Thayer.              |
| 34. David Cushing, 2d.        | 72. John D. Gates.                  |
| 35. David Fearing.            | 73. John O. Remington.              |
| 36. Anson Nickerson.          | 74. Abner L. Leavitt.               |
| 37. Thomas Sprague.           | 75. Emeline Hollis.                 |
| 38. Ebed L. Ripley.           | 76. Heirs of Martin Fearing.        |



- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| 77. John M. Corbett.                          | 101. Zenas Loring.      |
| 78. Thomas Stephenson.                        | 102. Lincoln Fearing.   |
| 79. Catherine H. Hobart.                      | 103. Bela Whiton.       |
| 80. Charles B. W. Lane.                       | 104. Erastus Whiton.    |
| 81. Bela H. Whiton.                           | 105. Luther Stephenson. |
| 82. Seth L. Hobart.                           | 106. Henry M. Hersey.   |
| 83. John Todd.                                | 107. E. Waters Burr.    |
| 84. George Lincoln.                           | 108. Samuel Sherman.    |
| 85. Maria Hersey.                             | 109. Israel Whitcomb.   |
| 86. Royal Whiton.                             | 110. Allen A. Lincoln.  |
| 87. Royal Whiton.                             | 111. John B. Lewis.     |
| 88. Adeline A. Barnes.                        | 112. Thomas H. Lincoln. |
| 89. Thomas Cain.                              | 113. Reuben Thomas.     |
| 90. Charles F. Hough.                         | 114. Charles Spring.    |
| 91. E. Waters Burr.                           | 115. Silas H. Cobb.     |
| 92. William P. Kelsey.                        | 116. Henry C. Harding.  |
| 93. Giles H. Gardner.                         | 117. Russell LeBaron.   |
| 94. Ebed L. Ripley.                           | 118. Parish.            |
| 95. Eliza Ann Sprague.                        | 119. Sydney Lincoln.    |
| 96. Reuben Sprague.                           | 120. Morris Fearing.    |
| 97. William Jones.                            | 121. Reuben Reed.       |
| 98. Thomas C. Humphrey.                       | 122. George W. Tilden.  |
| 99. Albert Fearing.                           | 123. Charles Schmidt.   |
| 100. Henry Merritt, Jr. and George R. Turner. |                         |

Public worship, after the alterations, was first held on the Sabbath, September 12, 1869.

## PARISH SEAL.

At a Parish meeting held October 15, 1869, a committee consisting of Quincy Bicknell and Wallace Corthell, previously appointed to procure a common seal for the use of the Parish and to prepare a device for the same, made a report, in which they stated that the design was made by Mr. Corthell, and consists of a picture of the Meeting-house in a centre surrounded by an ornamental circular border, which is itself encircled by another, leaving a sufficient space between the two for the following motto and date :

"LET THE WORK OF OUR FATHERS STAND,—1681."

The committee stated that the motto was selected by Hon. Solomon Lincoln. The report of the committee was unanimously adopted by the Parish.

## LIGHTING THE HOUSE.

At the above meeting, held October 15, 1869, the subject of furnishing apparatus for lighting the Meeting-house was referred to a committee consisting of Quincy Bicknell, John K. Corthell, and Israel Whitcomb, to report at a future meeting. 1870, January 11, the committee made a verbal report stating the number and form of lamps which would be desirable and put in position at a cost of one hundred and fifty dollars. Upon this subject there was a difference of opinion. A proposition to substitute an evening for an afternoon service was negatived; but after further debate it was finally voted "that lamps be procured for the lighting of the Meeting-house, as recommended by the committee; but the house on no occasion shall be lighted except for public worship, or religious meetings connected with the Society."

In 1870, July 1, the Parish voted "that an evening service be substituted for the afternoon service during the months of July, August and September of this year." By a subsequent vote, the evening service was continued during the month of October. In the three subsequent years, 1871, 1872, 1873, votes were passed by the Parish, at the annual meetings, to substitute an evening for an afternoon service, from July 1 to November 1, in each year.

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## GIFT OF A LOT OF LAND.

At a Parish meeting held July 1, 1870, information was given that Hon. Albert Fearing had expressed a wish to give a lot of land to the Parish, to enlarge its grounds, if the same would be acceptable. The Parish Committee were authorized to confer with Mr. Fearing on the subject and to accept any such proposed gift. 1870, October 5, the committee presented the following

### REPORT:

The Parish Committee who were authorized by vote of the Parish to receive of the Hon. Albert Fearing a deed of gift of a piece of land adjoining the Parish land, report that they have received a deed of

said land and herewith present the same to the Parish. And your committee would recommend in the acceptance of this gift the following votes :

Voted, That the First Parish in Hingham, in Parish meeting assembled, gratefully accept the gift of a piece of land described in a deed of the same by Hon. Albert Fearing, dated August 22, 1870, according to and subject to the conditions and provisions therein mentioned, and return to him thanks of acknowledgment for this munificent gift, recognizing herein another among the many acts of liberality which have marked the life-long interest he has manifested in the prosperity of this ancient Parish.

Voted, That this gift has a peculiar value to the Parish, found in the recital of the deed, "being a part of the land granted to Robert Peck, Teacher of the First Church in Hingham, in the year 1638," so that land appropriated by the Town, (at that time being identical with the Parish,) for the purpose of furthering religious instruction among the people, has again, through the liberality of a descendant of one of those, for whose benefit among the others, this land was devoted, been returned to complete the purpose of its original grant.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

JOHN K. CORTHELL,	} <i>Parish</i> <i>Committee.</i>
QUINCY BICKNELL.	

HINGHAM, September 30, 1870.

The above report was accepted, and the Clerk was requested to communicate the same to Mr. Fearing.

At the same meeting, a committee to whom had been referred the subject of grading the Parish grounds, and for the erection of a building suitable to accommodate horses and carriages, made a report. The committee presented a plan which would enable the Parish to meet the wishes of the citizens of the town, often expressed, for the widening and reducing the grade of Main street in front of the Parish lands. They recommended a release by the Parish to the town, of so much of the land of the former, as was designated, and to establish a new line on the street, provided the town would cause a suitable wall to be built to protect the Parish lands on the said line. The

committee also recommended the erection of a building on the lot given by Hon. Albert Fearing, for the shelter of horses and carriages, ninety feet long, and forty-three feet and six inches wide, with ten feet posts, at an estimated cost of fifteen hundred dollars.

This report was referred to the Parish Committee and Ebed S. Ripley, Ezra Stephenson and Seth L. Hobart, with instructions to proceed at once to grade the grounds and erect a carriage house as proposed, but if they should deem it advisable to deviate from the plan, thereby materially increasing the expense, to make report to the Parish before proceeding with the work. At the annual meeting held March 13, 1871, the committee reported that the work was finished. The grounds had been graded, a carriage house erected, suitable fences and walls built, and the platform around the Meeting-house enlarged, the cost of which including certain incidental expenses, amounted to \$2,381.49. The report was accepted by the Parish, and provision made for defraying the expense. The stalls in the new building (twenty in number) were let by auction and have since been disposed of in the same manner, or by the Parish Committee, by virtue of a special vote of the Parish.

At a Parish meeting held September 18, 1871, a vote was passed giving consent that the wall proposed to be built by the town on the line of the Parish land on Main street, or such part of it as is necessary, be built upon the Parish ground, the face of the capping of the same to be on the line of the street; the style of the capping to be referred to a committee consisting of the Parish Committee together with Seth L. Hobart, James S. Lewis and Caleb B. Marsh, with authority to act in the premises as they may deem advisable, and also to grade the grounds to conform to the wall.

At the same meeting it was voted, that a fence be built upon the wall such as the same committee may deem suitable.

At the annual meeting, held March 6, 1872, the committee appointed September 18, 1871, to take charge of capping to be placed upon the wall on Main street, to procure a suitable fence to surmount said wall, and to complete the grading of the grounds around the Meeting-house, reported to the Parish that they had completed the work so far as practicable, on account of the severity of the season, at an expense of \$846.80, but that to complete the work of grading, painting the fence, and setting out suitable trees on the grounds and on the edge of the side-walk in front, a further expenditure would be necessary, estimated at \$275. The report was accepted; the committee continued and authorized to carry out their

plan. Twelve maple trees were planted on the edge of the side-walk, in May, 1872, under the direction of George Lincoln.

1873, March, the Parish appointed a committee consisting of John Todd, George Lincoln and Seth L. Hobart, to take into consideration the improvement of the grounds on the south side of the "Church edifice," and report a plan and the estimated expense of the same, at a meeting to be held in April. At the April meeting, the committee reported a plan for improving the grade of the Parish grounds at an estimated expense of one thousand dollars. John Todd, George Lincoln, Seth L. Hobart, Albert Fearing and Solomon Lincoln, were chosen a committee with full powers to carry out the improvement recommended by the committee. The work on this improvement is now in progress; and when completed, will doubtless add to the convenience and beauty of the grounds.

We have thus presented such facts respecting the Meeting-house as we have collected from various public records, private manuscripts and authentic traditions, in chronological order, to enable those who are interested in its history, to know what has been done for its preservation and what are its present appearance and condition.

The whole house has been put in a thorough state of repair from spire to basement; the outside has been clapboarded and painted. New windows have been inserted and glazed with diamond glass, which, so far, is a restoration of the form of the original sashes. The foundation has been rebuilt, and the grounds graded. Inside we find much that is old and some work that is new. The floor is new, so also are the pews or slips, and the organ. The substantial columns which sustain the galleries and roof remain as formerly. The galleries are untouched. The pulpit, built in 1755, still remains in the same position, and the ancient sounding-board over it, is also preserved. The curious frame of oak which sustains the roof, belfry and spire, and which is as old as the Meeting-house itself, remains as our fathers left it. A spacious basement has been constructed for the reception of two large furnaces set in brick by which the whole house is comfortably heated. Lamps have been suspended for lighting the house, for evening worship, which diffuse a cheerful and mellow light throughout the house. The Old and the New are most judiciously harmonized in all the arrangements; and there is no reason why the fabric, which has stood firmly through the storms and tempests of nearly two centuries, should not stand for two centuries to come. In the words of the motto on the Parish Seal,

"LET THE WORK OF OUR FATHERS STAND."



Having given so much of the history of the Meeting-house as seemed to be desirable to preserve in a permanent form, we think it proper to give other information, derived from the records and other authentic sources, intimately connected with that history, and convenient also for reference.

## MINISTERS.

In connection with notes upon the history of the Meeting-houses of the First Parish, it seems proper to give the names of the Pastors who have officiated in them. The town was formally settled in 1635. In September of that year, house lots were drawn by thirty persons, most of whom came from Hingham and its vicinity, in the County of Norfolk, England. Among them was Rev. Peter Hobart, who became their Pastor, and remained with them until his death.

We give the subjoined list of Pastors, with a brief notice of prominent facts in their history, not designing to give any extended sketches of their lives, which may be found elsewhere. We do not include in the list, Rev. Robert Peck, who came over in 1638, was ordained "Teacher" of the Church, and returned to Hingham, England, in 1641.

I. REV. PETER HOBART, son of Edmund and Margaret (Dewy) Hobart, was born in Hingham, England, where he was baptized October 13, 1604. He was educated at Magdalen College, Cambridge, where he received the degree of Bachelor, in 1625, and of Master of Arts, in 1629. He was married in England, and came to this country with his wife and four children, and arrived in June, 1635. He settled in this town in September, of that year. He was twice married, the last wife being Rebecca, daughter of Richard Ibrook. Mr. Hobart had a large family of children. He names fifteen in his will, five of whom were educated at Harvard College. Two of his grandsons were also educated at the same institution. Four of the sons and the two grandsons were ministers. Mr. Hobart was Pastor of the church until his decease, January 20, 1678-9, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, and forty-fourth of his ministry.



II. REV. JOHN NORTON was the second minister of Hingham. He was a son of William and Lucy (Downing) Norton, of Ipswich, in which town he was born, about 1650. He was educated at Harvard College, and was graduated in 1671. He was a nephew of Rev. John Norton, the distinguished minister of Ipswich and Boston. He was ordained Colleague Pastor with Mr. Hobart, November 27, 1678, less than two months before the decease of the latter. Mr. Norton was married to Mary, a daughter of Arthur Mason, of Boston, and left two children,—Elizabeth Norton, who married Col. John Quincy, and Capt. John Norton. The descendants in both male and female lines have been prominent in politics, theology, and literature. Mr. Norton died October 3, 1716, in the sixty-sixth year of his age and thirty-eighth of his ministry.

III. REV. EBENEZER GAY, D. D., the third minister, was a son of Nathaniel and Lydia Gay, of Dedham, and was born in that town, August 15, 1696. He was graduated at Harvard College in 1714. He had four classmates from Hingham, viz.: Samuel Thaxter, Nehemiah Hobart, Adam Cushing and Job Cushing. Dr. Gay began to preach in Hingham in 1717, and was ordained Pastor, June 11, 1718. He was married November 3, 1719, to Jerusha, daughter of Samuel Bradford, of Duxbury, the son of William Bradford, and the grandson of Governor Bradford. They had eleven children, of whom seven died before their father, and two sons and two daughters survived him. Some of the descendants have been well known in the professions of law and medicine, as well as in literature and art. Dr. Gay died on Sabbath morning, March 8, 1787, when he was preparing for the usual public services of the day. He was attacked by a sudden illness, which terminated fatally within an hour. He was ninety years old, and the length of his ministry was sixty-eight years nine months and seven days, and including the time of his preaching before his settlement, his ministry falls short, by a few months only, of seventy years.

IV. REV. HENRY WARE, D. D., the fourth minister, was a son of John and Martha Ware, of Sherborn, and was born in that town, April 1, 1764. He was graduated at Harvard College, in 1785, and ordained Pastor, October 24, 1787. In 1805, he was chosen Hollis Professor of Divinity, in Harvard College; the appointment was confirmed by the Overseers on the 14th of February

of that year. In consequence of this appointment, he asked a dismission from the pastorate, which was granted by the Parish, and he delivered his valedictory discourse, May 5, 1805, in the eighteenth year of his ministry.

Dr. Ware discharged the duties of his professorship until 1840, in which year he resigned the position, on account of a failure of eyesight, after a laborious and acceptable service of thirty-five years.

Dr. Ware was thrice married. In 1789, March 31, he was married to Mary, daughter of Rev. Jonas Clark, of Lexington, who died July 13, 1805, having been the mother of ten children,—seven daughters and three sons. He was married a second time, to Mary, daughter of James Otis, and widow of Benjamin Lincoln, Junior. She died on the 17th of the same month. He was married a third time, in September, 1807, to Elizabeth Bowes, daughter of Nicholas Bowes, of Boston, who became the mother of nine children, five sons and four daughters. Six of Dr. Ware's sons were graduated at Harvard College, and his sons and grandsons have been distinguished in the professions, and in the walks of literature and science. Dr. Ware died at Cambridge, July 12, 1845, aged eighty-one.

V. REV. JOSEPH RICHARDSON, fifth minister, was a son of Joseph and Patty (Chapman) Richardson, of Billerica, and was born in that town, February 1, 1778. He was graduated at Dartmouth College, in 1802, and ordained Pastor, July 2, 1806. During his ministry, he was chosen to fill various public offices. He was a member of the convention called to revise the State Constitution, in 1820–21. He was a member, by repeated elections, of the Senate and House of Representatives of Massachusetts, and was elected to Congress for the term commencing March 4, 1827, and re-elected for that commencing March 4, 1829.

At the close of his Congressional service, he resumed and attended to his parochial duties, without interruption, except from ill health, when the Parish relieved him by temporary supplies of the pulpit, until the spring of 1855, when, with his consent and approval, Rev. Calvin Lincoln, was settled as Associate Pastor. The services of inducting Mr. Lincoln into this office were performed May 27th, 1855, on which occasion, Mr. Richardson and Mr. Lincoln each preached an appropriate sermon.

After this date, Mr. Richardson occasionally preached, and performed other parochial services. We mention some of his discourses and sermons on special occasions.

1856, June 28. He delivered a discourse on the close of the fiftieth year of his ministry, which was printed.

1862, February 2. He preached a sermon on the Sabbath after the eighty-fourth anniversary of his birth.

1863, February 1. A sermon written by Mr. Richardson the preceding week, for the occasion of the eighty-fifth anniversary of his birth, was read by the Associate Pastor. His text was from JOSHUA, XIV, 10. "*And now, lo I am this day four score and five years old.*" Dr. Gay preached his celebrated sermon entitled "THE OLD MAN'S CALENDAR," from the same text, at the same age, from the same pulpit. Both the sermons were printed. Mr. Richardson also prepared discourses for the Sabbaths after the 86th and 87th anniversaries of his birth, which were read by the Associate Pastor. He was present at the re-opening of the Meeting-house, September 8, 1869, as has been mentioned; and attended public worship, for the last time on Sabbath morning, October 3, 1869. The infirmities of age increased, he had become blind, yet his strong constitution did not yield, until September 25, 1871, when he died at the age of ninety-three years seven months and twenty-four days, and closing a pastoral connection of sixty-five years, two months and twenty-three days.

Mr. Richardson was married May 23, 1807, to Ann, daughter of Benjamin Bowers, of Billerica. She was born in that town, March 14, 1785, and died September 16, 1870, aged eighty-seven years six months, and two days. They had no children.

VI. REV. CALVIN LINCOLN, the present Pastor, is the sixth minister of the Parish. He is a native of Hingham, a son of Calvin and Linda (Loring) Lincoln, and a lineal descendant of Stephen Lincoln, one of the early settlers of the town. Mr. Lincoln was graduated at Harvard College, in 1820, was ordained over the First Parish in Fitchburg, June 30, 1824; his active ministry there terminated June 15, 1850; and his pastoral connection was dissolved May 5, 1855, a short time before his induction to the pastoral office in this Parish. The length of his ministry here exceeds that of Dr. Ware. We forbear, for obvious reasons, to enlarge upon the personal history of our respected Pastor, and leave to others, at some future time, more appropriate than the present, to speak of his life and character.

We close these brief minutes respecting the ministers of the Parish, with a list of their names, with the years in which their pastoral connections began and terminated.

I.	Peter Hobart, . . . . .	1635-1679.
II.	John Norton, . . . . .	1678-1716.
III.	Ebenezer Gay, . . . . .	1718-1787.
IV.	Henry Ware, . . . . .	1787-1805.
V.	Joseph Richardson, . . . . .	1806-1871.
VI.	Calvin Lincoln, . . . . .	1855.

This is a remarkable statement; we think no similar one can be presented by any other Parish or Society in New England. Four of the ministers died in this town, and their remains repose in the Hingham Cemetery. One only, (Dr. Ware,) died out of this town; and the last is still living, actively engaged in the discharge of his pastoral duties. It is proper, in this connection, to state that after the decease of Mr. and Mrs. Richardson, the Parish purchased a lot in the Hingham Cemetery, and have caused an appropriate marble monument to be erected therein, to the memory of all their deceased Pastors: Hobart, Norton, Gay, Ware and Richardson,—and a marble memorial stone, appropriately inscribed, at the graves of Rev. Mr. Richardson and his wife.

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## SINGING; CHOIR; HYMN BOOKS AND ORGAN.

Intimately associated with our ancient Meeting-house, are the services which have been performed in it. Of them, the singing of songs of praise to Almighty God is an interesting part, and we have felt a strong desire to know more of what our fathers did to promote an interest and cultivate a taste for this important part of public worship. The voices of at least seven generations have sounded within its sacred walls. We are aware of the intense feelings which prevailed in relation to Psalmody at the settlement of the country, and what bitter controversies arose at every stage of improvement.

The Pilgrims of Plymouth brought over music to enliven the solitude of the wilderness. It is believed that they had but one book, and that was the Manual of Henry Ainsworth. It was entitled "*The Book of Psalms Englished both in Prose and Meeter.*" The prose was printed on the left-hand page; the poetry, with the music over it, on the right. This manual was used in Plymouth, so late as 1692.

The Puritans, who settled Massachusetts, undoubtedly used the version of the Psalms by Sternhold and Hopkins, "done into verse and set to music," and this version was used by many churches. It should be remarked, that the early settlers of New England always sang congregationally; and continued to do so for more than a century, and in some places, until the Revolution. In a few churches singing was excluded altogether.

In 1640, five years after this town was settled, Stephen Daye printed, at Cambridge, a new translation of the Psalms. Cotton Mather says that "the chief divines in the country took each of them a portion to be translated; among whom were Mr. Weld and Mr. Eliot, of Roxbury, and Mr. Mather, of Dorchester." Its popular title was the "*The Bay Psalm Book,*" but the title-page of the first edition is "*The Whole Book of Psalms Faithfully Translated into English Metre,*" etc. In this edition there were no hymns or spiritual songs. A second edition, in 1647, contained a few spiritual songs. In the same year Rev. John Cotton wrote his "*Singing of Psalms a Gospel Ordinance,*" which had an influence to extend the use of the Bay Psalm Book, which gradually made its way into the public services. A third edition of it, revised by President Dunster, was published in 1650. This version went through numerous editions, was reprinted in England and Scotland, and used by many of the English dissenting congregations. It was added to several English and Scotch editions of the Bible. This edition contained additional scriptural songs.

Rev. Thomas Prince revised the Bay Psalm Book, in 1758, several editions of which were published, and used in churches even up to the commencement of the present century. The title-page of the first edition of Prince's revision was "*The Psalms, Hymns & Spiritual Songs of the Old and New Testament Faithfully Translated into English Metre,—Being the New-England Psalm Book, Revised and Improved,*" etc.

Prior to this publication of the Bay Psalm Book, by Prince, the version of the Psalms by Tate & Brady, had been published in



London. The title-page of the first edition of this well known version was as follows: "*A New Version of the Psalms of David Fitted to the Tunes used in Churches.—By N. Tate and N. Brady, London, 1696.*"

In the second edition also, the name of Tate precedes that of Brady, but the Royal license for printing, of December 3, 1696, is granted upon the humble petition of Nicolas Brady and Nahum Tate, and in subsequent editions, the names are printed in the same order.

An edition of Watts's Psalms and Hymns, was published in Boston, in 1741.

We have thus given a brief account of the principal versions of the psalms and hymns which were used for the first century and a half after the settlement of the country. For many of these facts we are indebted to Charles Deane, Esq., of Cambridge, who has a rare collection of the early Psalm and Hymn Books; and also to Rev. Elias Nason, of North Billerica, by whose kindness we have enjoyed the privilege of perusing his interesting Lecture, in manuscript, on New England Psalmody.

We have made diligent inquiry for a copy of either of the collections which we have mentioned, and have not succeeded in finding a single one of the early editions of either of them in the possession of any person in this town, excepting that of Tate & Brady, of which there are several copies in existence, to which we shall hereafter make more particular reference.

The mode of performing the exercise of singing was generally the same in all churches. As books were few, while ruling elders were continued, one of them read a single line and such of the congregation as could sing arose in different parts of the Meeting-house and sung it, and then another line until the psalm or hymn was finished. In later times, when no such officers were chosen, a deacon and sometimes the minister performed the same duty.

We have no records of an early date to show how the subject of Psalmody was regarded in this Parish. We have reason to believe, however, that Peter Hobart, the first minister, was not indifferent to it, for Cotton Mather, in his appreciative biographical sketch of Mr. Hobart, says, that during his last illness, "the singing of psalms was an exercise wherein he took a particular delight;" saying "that it was the work of Heaven, which he was willing to anticipate."

It is quite probable that the versions of the psalms by Sternhold and Hopkins printed with the Bible, to which we have alluded, may have been used.



Nothing with reference to the musical part of the service occurs in the records of the Parish, until 1763, when, on the 8th of April, a meeting was held "in order to see whether the said Parish will assign any perticular place, seat or seats where a number of persons skilled in Musick may set together that so that part of Religious exercise may be performed with decency and order."

At this meeting it was voted "that Mr. Gay be desired to invite one or more to set in ye seat behind the Deacons' to strike first in singing," and further "that a part of the womans' front seat and ye second seat, not exceeding one half of each, be seperated for ye use of the singers."

No mention is made of the persons selected by Mr. Gay. That the request, however, was complied with, is confirmed by the fact that the Parish, at a meeting held in the following June, declined to add one or more "to the number of singers already in ye seat, behind the Deacons' seat."

Fifteen years afterwards, in May, 1778, it was voted "that the two hindermost seats in the body of the Meeting-house, both men's & women's, be appropriated to the use of the singers;" and in the following September, the portion thus set off was further enlarged by a vote "that the three hindermost seats in the Meeting-house be appropriated to the singers and that they have liberty to make doors & flaps of bords to each seat." This arrangement, from some unexplained reason, was of brief duration; for in the year following, on the 8th of November, the Parish voted "to indulge the singers a Liberty to set in the front gallery where it best suited them."

The permission thus granted was probably accepted on the part of the choir, and at or near this time the removal of the singers from the body of the house to the gallery took place.

With the exception of a few unimportant votes relating to the alteration of the seats and the appropriation of a small sum of money for the benefit of the singers in the Parish for procuring fire-wood, candles, etc., for their accommodation at their meetings, nothing of interest occurs in the records, until 1799, when, on the 11th of March, a committee of seven was chosen for the purpose of laying "some plan that will best accommodate & promote the singing & unite the singers." At a subsequent meeting in April, this committee was continued with additional instructions with regard to procuring a "room, fireing and candles," and also with the further provision that if it should be found "that the school-house will not accommodate

them the committee might provide some other room at the expense of the Parish."

On the 10th of March of the next year, 1800, the committee submitted a report which was accepted, "with this addition, that the 15 singers are to procure a teacher."

There can be little doubt that from 1763, the time of the selection by Dr. Gay of three persons "to strike first in singing," to 1800, the number who participated in this part of the service gradually increased, until, as appears from the foregoing vote, fifteen persons were included in the choir.

In 1801, March 9, it was voted "that the Parish be at the expense of purchasing a Bass-viol and commit it to Barnabas Lincoln, to be used by him or his family in the Meeting-house to assist the melody, and that Mr. Barnabas Lincoln be invited to assist in leading the bass."

This is the first record we find of any action by the Parish to encourage the introduction of any musical instrument to aid in the performances by the choir.

The bass-viol (violoncello) was continued in use from its first introduction until 1867. Various other musical instruments were used from time to time, and among them were the clarionet, double bass-viol, tenor-viol, violin, bassoon and flute. The flute and bass-viol were principally relied on to give harmony and effect to the musical performances. These were in the hands of several persons in succession, who voluntarily assumed the charge of performing upon them.

1809, March 24, the Parish voted "that the singers have the use of the whole of the front gallery." 1825, March 8, voted "that the leader of the singers have the use of pew No. 67, on the lower floor."

It was not customary for the Parish, until a later period, to make any formal election of a chorister. The singing was regulated by the members of the choir, in conjunction with the Parish Committee, and sometimes by a special committee. The whole service was voluntary and gratuitous. The Parish occasionally granted aid to singing schools and adopted other measures to promote the "improvement of the singing."

1858, March 9, the Parish voted "that Rev. Mr. Lincoln be requested to select a hymn, at the close of the forenoon and afternoon services of the Sabbath, adapted to be sung in a familiar tune, that the congregation may join with the choir in singing."

## ORGAN.

In 1867, the subject of introducing an Organ, as a substitute for other musical instruments, was discussed by those interested in improving this part of public worship, and the proposition met with so much favor, that measures were taken to procure one of moderate cost. At the annual meeting, held March 6, this vote was passed: "That the consent of the Parish is hereby given to the erection of an Organ in the gallery of the Meeting-house." At the same meeting, John K. Corthell, John M. Corbett and Henry Siders, were chosen a committee "to have full charge of the Music, with authority to re-organize the Choir, and make such other arrangements as may seem to them best."

This proceeding virtually dissolved the old Choir; and David A. Hersey, who had performed on the bass-viol for nearly half a century, with admirable skill and fidelity, and Sidney Sprague, whose performances on the flute, for thirty-six years, had been so acceptable and gratifying to the Parish, closed their services. The Parish, very properly, recognized the value of their services, by passing the following vote: "Voted, That the thanks of the members of the Parish be given to Mr. David A. Hersey, Mr. Sidney Sprague, Mr. Israel Whitcomb and the other members of the Choir, for their long continued, faithful and satisfactory services," Mr. Whitcomb had been for some time, leader of the Choir.

1867, March 10, was the last Sabbath, on which the old Choir performed their services. On the 24th of the same month, a small Organ was used, which was loaned for the purpose, by the Old Colony Lodge of Freemasons; and on the next Sabbath, the Organ, which had been purchased and placed in the gallery, was used for the first time. Reuben Sprague officiated as organist.

1868, March 11, the Committee on Singing was abolished; and a Chorister was elected by the Parish, at the annual meeting. Gen. Luther Stephenson, Jun., was elected, and has been re-elected annually to this time, 1873.

In 1869, that part of the report of the Committee on Repairs was adopted, in which was this proposition: "That the location of the Choir and Organ should be such that they may best serve the purpose for which they were designed and instituted, and we therefore deem it expedient, that the Choir and Organ be located upon the platform on the Easterly side of the pulpit." This proposition was carried into effect.

1870, January 20, the Parish voted, "That it be recommended to the officiating Pastor to ask the Congregation to adopt the form of Congregational singing, for the closing hymn of the morning service, the tune to be announced and the whole Congregation rising."

1870, July 1, at a Parish meeting, it was voted, that the Parish purchase an Organ, to be placed in the Meeting-house, at an expense not exceeding Twenty-one hundred dollars, provided that all such sum or sums of money as have already been subscribed or which may hereafter be subscribed towards that purpose, be paid into the Parish treasury; also that the old Organ be sold and the proceeds of such sale be paid into the Parish treasury. Voted, that a committee of three be chosen with full powers to carry out the provisions of the above vote, said committee to consist of E. Waters Burr, Ebed S. Ripley and Luther Stephenson, Jun. In accordance with this vote, an Organ was procured which was built by J. H. Willcox & Co., of Boston, placed in its position in the Meeting-house, and used for the first time, in the services of public worship, on Sabbath day, September 11, 1870. The cost of the Organ itself was precisely the amount authorized, \$2,100. The incidental expenses of alteration of platform to receive it and for sundry other charges, amounted to \$108.66, making the whole cost of the Organ \$2,208.66. This amount was paid by subscription. The Parish ordered the list of subscribers to be recorded in the Parish records, which has been done. The organists have been Reuben Sprague, before mentioned, who performed on the first Organ, William H. Nash, who performed on both Organs, and Francis O. Nash, who succeeded him, and is the present organist. The Choir is a double quartette,—two who sing soprano, two, alto; two, bass; and two, tenor.

Having given some account of the earliest editions of psalm and hymn books which were in use in this country in the first century and a half after its settlement, we have diligently sought from tradition or written record for some evidence of the views which were entertained in this Parish respecting them and of the practical use which was made of them. The disputes respecting singing by *rote* or by *note* were very violent, nor were they less bitter in relation to the introduction of musical instruments. There is no evidence that this Parish participated in these controversies. There is a vague tradition, that one individual only was disturbed, when the bass-viol was first used. Dr. Jonathan Edwards was a lover of music and favored the new way of singing by note, while Dr. Nathaniel Emmons regarded

the use of any musical instrument an abomination. They were both eminent divines. Undoubtedly the hymn book of Tate & Brady was well known to members of this Parish several years before any action was taken to regulate the practice of singing, (1763.) Thus we find that Joshua Leavitt, who for thirty years was so well known as the treasurer of the town, was the owner of a copy of Tate & Brady in 1759, of the edition of 1754, and Caleb Gill, another respected member of the Parish, inscribed his name in a copy of the edition of 1757, in 1791. We infer from these facts, that Tate & Brady's version of the psalms, with hymns added, chiefly from Dr. Watts, and about fifty tunes attached, was used for thirty or more years.

William Billings, a famous composer of music, who was born in 1746 and died in 1800, had great influence in causing an entire revolution in sacred music. In 1770, he published his "New England Psalm-singer or American Chorister," containing a number of psalm-tunes, anthems and canons, upwards of 100 in number.

This "Psalm-singer" came into general use, and during the war of the Revolution, was well known in the army as well as in the churches. It destroyed the practice of "deaconing" the psalm or hymn, and led the way to the singing by choirs. Some of the tunes of Billings are yet occasionally sung, but the compositions of later authors have gradually superseded them as the public taste and sentiment have improved. During the ministry of Dr. Ware, the "*Psalms and Hymns*" collected by Dr. *Jeremy Belknap* were introduced. The first edition of this collection was published, probably, in 1795, as the Preface is dated May 10, of that year. In 1830, April 8, the Parish voted "that this Parish will hereafter, in the services of public worship, make use of the *Cambridge Selection of Hymns and Psalms*," accordingly, Belknap's collection was used until new books could be procured, and for the last time, April 25, 1830, and the "Cambridge Selection" was used for the first time on Sunday, May 2, 1830. In 1844, March 5, at the annual meeting, a committee was chosen on the subject of a change of hymn books, and by their recommendation Dr. Greenwood's "*Collection of Psalms and Hymns for Christian Worship*" was adopted and continued to be used until April 17, 1870, when the "*Hymn and Tune Book*," published by the American Unitarian Association, was used for the first time, agreeably to a vote of March 21, of the same year. This Collection is now used.

We are not able to state at what time female singers first became members of the Choir. It was certainly before the close of the last century. Within the recollection of persons now living they were



so numerous as to fill one-half the front seat in the singers gallery, and also the front seats of the Eastern gallery to the pews.

We here close our minutes on the subject of music, some of which will, perhaps, afford but little interest to many readers; but we trust that these gleanings may be regarded in a different light by those who are to come after us. We shall at least enjoy the satisfaction of presenting historical facts and local traditions which will suggest to others that a field of inquiry and research is opened worthy of further investigation. There is no doubt that many interesting facts preserved in private records and in the memories of aged persons remain to be disclosed to us.

## MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

**BELLS.** We have seen that when the town voted to build the present Meeting-house a vote was also passed to procure a new bell "as big againe as the old one was, if it may be had." That a bell was obtained by authority of that vote is evident from the following copy of a receipt preserved by Daniel Cushing:

"BOSTON, JANUARY 8, 1680. (—81.)

Reed of Mr. Daniel Cushing in money five pounds four shillings in full for a bell sold him and Capt. Hubbard. I say Reed by me.

THO. CLARKE."

In the Parish records, we find, that in 1731, November 19, "Samuel Thaxter, Jun., Joshua Hearsee and Joseph Lewes" were impowered to procure the repair of the bell, "if it may be conveniently done, otherwise to exchange the same for a new one as soon as may be." At the same time, one hundred pounds was raised towards procuring a new bell, if there should be occasion.

1731-2, March 6. The Parish voted, "That there should be a new Bellfrey erected on the top of the meeting house of the Precinct, and ordered, that the assessors of sd precinct see the work accomplished."



1732-3, March 5. The committee was authorized "to draw from the Treasury what is wanting for the new Bell," £29 2s. At the same time a committee was chosen to obtain a "new tounge for the Bell, or to enlarge or lengthen the present."

From all which, we infer, that a new bell was obtained by authority of the preceding votes.

1752, May 14. The Standing Committee of the Precinct, viz.: Mr. Isaac Lincoln, Joseph Thaxter, and Hezekiah Cushing, were "impowered to treat with, and agree, if they think proper, with Mr. Caleb Barker, upon reasonable terms to new cast the Bell."

In 1765, May, the Parish voted "to New Cast ye bell, and that it be made six hundred weight and that twenty pounds lawful money be raised for doing the same."

In 1783, May 12, the Parish voted to raise £45 to defray the expense of "New Casting their Bell."

In 1793, July, it was voted, to "cause an additional weight to the tongue of the Bell."

In 1818, August 31, the Parish voted to have a new bell. It was also voted, "to choose a committee to dispose of the old bell to the best advantage they can, & procure a new bell that shall weigh not less than eleven hundred weight nor more than thirteen hundred, and that the committee be authorized to draw money from the treasurer to defray the expense." The committee then chosen for the purpose above mentioned, consisted of John Leavitt, Benjamin Thomas, Jedediah Lincoln, Blossom Sprague and Caleb Hobart, Jun. The old bell weighed, when sold, 542 pounds, the new bell weighed 1106 pounds. This bell lasted but for a short time; and it became necessary to procure a new one; and at a Parish meeting, held May 6, 1822, Voted, to choose a committee to inquire if a bell, weighing from twelve to fifteen hundred weight, can be procured, and on what conditions. The committee consisted of Benjamin Beal, John Leavitt, Charles Lane, Charles Gill, and Peter Sprague. Voted, "that the aforesaid committee be authorized to purchase a bell of the above description if necessary." They did regard it as necessary, and purchased the present bell, weighing 1537 pounds. It was placed in the belfry, July 26, 1822, and has been in use for more than half a century.

CLOCKS. Before the Revolutionary War, there was a clock placed in the Meeting-house, in the attic story, the dial of which appeared in the dormer-window on the south-westerly slope of the

roof; and was thus visible to the public. It was owned by proprietors, and constructed by Dr. Josiah Leavitt, who is said to have built and resided in the house now owned and occupied by George Bassett. It was built in 1773.

We find the following votes respecting the Clock in the Parish records.

1774, March 14, at a Parish meeting, "the question was put whether the request of the proprietors of the Clock in the Meeting-house, be referred to next May meeting, passed in the affirmative."

1774, May 18, the Parish voted, "that the weights of the Clock in the Meeting-house have their course through the ceiling down into the body of the House."

1775, March 13, at a Parish meeting, "upon a motion made and seconded, the question was put whether Mr. Samuel Thaxter have refunded to him his expenses for the Clock weights and it passed in the affirmative."

For some cause, unknown to us, the Clock was removed. Dr. Leavitt sold his estate in 1777, to Joseph Blake, of Rutland, and was afterwards an organ builder in Boston.

A Clock to give the time inside the House, was placed, in 1835, on the front of the singers' gallery. It was obtained by subscription, and set in motion, on the morning of the celebration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the settlement of the Town, September 28, 1835. This Clock was made by Aaron Willard and is now in use. It is a great improvement upon the hour-glass which formerly stood upon the pulpit to mark the hours and indicate the length of the services. The substitution of a marble, for its original face, has improved its appearance.

**HEATING THE HOUSE.** The first attempt to heat the Meeting-house was in 1822. A subscription having been made of a sufficient amount of money to purchase suitable stoves and apparatus connected with them, the Parish at a meeting held on January 22d, of that year, voted, "that the Parish give their assent that two stoves with the necessary funnels, may be set up in the Meeting-house in the two front outside body pews, the front of said pews to be taken away, in the winter season, for the purpose, said stoves to be set up under the direction of the Parish Committee."

The Parish, at the same meeting, voted to supply fuel and to employ a person to attend to the fires; subsequently, coal stoves were substituted for those first in use in which wood was used for fuel, and they remained until the extensive repairs were made in 1869, when the mode of heating by furnaces in the basement, was adopted.

**TOWN MEETINGS.** All the Town meetings were held in the present Meeting-house from 1682, when it was first opened for public use, until October, 1780. After that date, to accommodate the voters residing in the south part of the Town, some of the meetings were held in the Meeting-house of the Second Parish.

In 1827, March 13, the Parish voted, "that no more Town meetings shall be held in the Meeting-house of the First Parish, from and after the last day of February next." After that date, meetings were held in the Hall of Derby Academy, or in the Meeting-house of the Second Parish, until the erection of a Town House, in 1844. A Town meeting was first held in the Town House, November 11, 1844. It will thus be seen, that the Town meetings for about one century were held exclusively in this ancient edifice. It was erected in the reign of Charles II and stood where it now stands, during the remaining reigns of all the sovereigns of the House of Stuart and the House of Hanover.

The Society, which has worshipped in it, has literally been "the mother of many people."

Cohasset now contains four religious societies; and the Second Parish has two societies within its original limits. And within the present century, there have been formed, within the present territorial limits, of the First Parish, five other societies, viz: the Third Congregational, Universalist, Baptist, Methodist and Evangelical Orthodox Societies, while the venerable old Meeting-house, in which both Puritans and Pilgrims assembled for public worship, still gathers around its altar a large and harmonious congregation of their descendants.

**ANTIQUITY OF THE MEETING-HOUSE.** It has been repeatedly stated, that this is the oldest house of public worship in New England. We mean by that, the oldest edifice erected for that purpose, and which has been preserved with reverential care to this day. Fragments and relics of other ancient Meeting-houses may have been preserved elsewhere, which are claimed to have existed before the erection of this Meeting-house. It should be borne in mind, that parts of the first, or "old house," as it was called, were, as we learn by tradition, used in the construction of this house.

We have examined with care, Bishop Meade's highly interesting volumes on the "*Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia*," published in 1857, and from that and other sources of information, we learn, that nothing remains but the ruins of any of those ancient

Episcopal Churches, which were erected in Virginia, before 1681; so that we assert, with entire confidence, that no house for public worship exists within the original limits of the United States, which continues to be used for the purpose for which it was erected, and remaining on the same site where it was built, which is so old as the Meeting-house of the First Parish in Hingham.

We shall be pardoned for introducing here brief extracts from a discourse delivered in our ancient Meeting-house, September 8, 1850, by Rev. Alonzo Hill, D. D., of Worcester. The thoughts were striking then, and appropriate now. Alluding to his invitation to preach in this House, he remarks as follows :

“It seemed to me something to be permitted to worship with you in an edifice which has survived the casualties and changes of an hundred and sixty-eight years :—an edifice which dates back to the days of Charles II, and in which strength was obtained to resist his infringement of New England’s charter ;—an edifice whose beams were laid in New England’s darkest days, by men who were fresh from the desolating wars of Philip, aided by women whose sons had been butchered at their own doors by Indian tomahawks. It is something to stand in the pulpit under which men who had shared in the perils of the winter’s passage of the “Mayflower” may have sat and worshipped ; where Eliot may have stood in his old age, and bent himself in prayer ; and where Gay, for nearly seventy years, with strength unabated and eye undimmed, ministered. Associations of this kind must be familiar to you, and must endear this venerable church as no modern edifice, however beautiful and adorned with art, can be endeared. To you, this antique structure must be all written over with the memories of the past ; this pulpit, these walls and pews, must bear to your hearts the history of the men and women who are gone,—the venerated and loved, whose names are recorded in your village annals and on the tombstones of your grave-yards.

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“You have done well reverently to preserve, repair, and prop your old venerated Meeting-house. Let it stand a thousand years ; for it must speak as no modern edifice can speak to the hearts of a people. It has its story of bygone days, and communes with you of the invisible and distant. Images arise before you which cannot be seen in our recent structures ; and impressions you must receive here, which, if you cherish them as you ought, will sanctify and bless. Your fathers worshipped in this mountain, and it should be holy unto the Lord in the heart of their children.

\* \* \* \* \*



"The very year in which this church was completed, William Penn made his memorable treaty with the natives, so sacredly observed for more than seventy years. Since then their tribes have all wasted away. Since then have come the French wars, and the vast empire of France on this continent has been lost; the war of the Revolution, and the empire of England has been dismembered. Since then our free confederacy has been formed and grown to greatness; extending the shield of its protection, from ocean to ocean, over more than twenty millions of people. Under what varied circumstances have prayers been offered, and sermons been preached, from this pulpit! Under what emotions of fear and hope have the congregations come here to worship! The story of New England's joys and woes have all here been recorded; these silent walls have echoed to the tale of New England's glory and shame; they have witnessed her mournings for her losses, her fastings and wrestlings in prayer for success, her thanksgivings for her triumphs.

"Look also at our intellectual, social, and religious condition. When this church was erected, Newton was living; but his immortal discoveries had not put to flight the apprehensions which the return of a comet spread among the terror-stricken nations. Locke was then living; but his revelations of the powers of the human mind had not dispelled the delusions which filled New England with mourning, and stained her annals with crime. Milton had been dead seven years; but it was for the men of another century to comprehend the power of this transcendent genius, and to acknowledge his influence on the popular mind. Then Cook had not circumnavigated the globe, nor had Polynesia and Australia been discovered and reclaimed. The vast possessions of England in the East Indies were then confined to a solitary trading-house; and the vast regions of the West, now the seat of learning, arts, and religion, had but just been trodden by the foot of the solitary traveller. Mahometan arms had penetrated Europe, and were then besieging the gates of her central cities. Popery had been aroused by the energies of Luther, and was now making her last fruitless struggle for the annihilation of Protestantism. The year after this church was erected, the heads of Russell and Algernon Sidney rolled upon the scaffold in defence of spiritual freedom; and, five years later, James II and his creature Jeffries were pouring out the vials of their wrath, and attempting to break the best spirit of England and her colonies, and to trample their bravest and best men in the dust."

